

A Brief, and Plain  
**COMMENTARY,**  
WITH  
**NOTES:** *12/8 v*

Not more useful, than seasonable, upon the  
whole Prophecie of MALACHY.

Delivered, Sermon-wise, Divers years since, at  
*Pitmister, in Summerfet.*

By *William Sclater*, Doctor in Divinity, then Minister  
of that Parish,

Now, Published by his Son *William Sclater*,  
Batchelar in Divinity, late Fellow of Kings Colledg in  
*Cambridg.* now minister of *Collompton* in *Devon.*

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*Published according to Order.*

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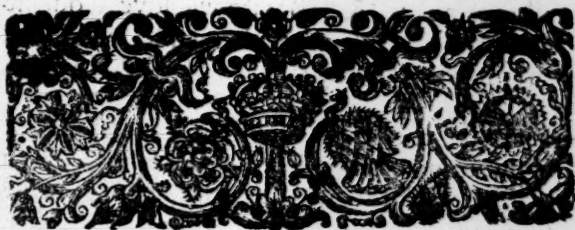


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TO  
THE RIGHT VVORSHIPFUL,

Mr. HENRY WALROND of *Bradfield*, in the  
County of *Devon*, Esquire, Grace, and Glory.

*Sir,*

**I**Ts a maxime with the School-  
men, (in whose volumes, amidst  
much superstitious oar, some  
gold of precious and refined  
wit, is, by a \* wary searcher, to  
be found) That charity is the  
form of every *Theological* vertue : Not, that it  
gives them al their several natures, or distinct indi-  
viduations : but for that it forms them al unto ac-  
ceptability before God, in whose repute even<sup>a</sup> An-  
gelical excellencies, without love, are but as a tink-  
ling cymbal, or an empty sound : It is, indeed,  
that royal grace, wherein, above other, God him-  
self doth, in a sort, reciprocate with his Saints ;

A 2

If

\* School men  
being more  
witty to raise  
questions, then  
judicious to as-  
soyl them, are  
warily to be  
read, at least by  
Novices. *Dr.*  
*Sclater*, p. 73. on  
2 *Thess.* c. i. v.  
11. & p. 202.  
203. *ib.* c. 2. v.  
15.

41 *Cor.* 13. 1.

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b 1 Joh. 4. 19.

c Joh. 13. 35.

d Gal. 2. 9.

A pillar.

εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν  
κατασκευασμένη  
ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία  
ἀποστόλων.

Isidor. Pelusota,  
l. 1. Ep. 356.

f Redditur tri-  
na Negationi  
trina confessio, ne  
minus amoris lin-  
guæ serviat,  
quam timori.

S. August. tract.  
127. in Joha-  
nem.

g 3 Epist. Joh. 9

b 2 Thess. 2. 3.

i Du Moulin.

Art. 23. De-  
fence of K. Ja.  
against Cæse-  
ricu.

k Beza, Annot.  
on Matth. 16.  
v. 19.

l Dico, quod  
nullus Apostole-  
rum, præter Pe-  
trum, factus est  
à Christo Epis-  
copus; Petrus  
de palude, de po-  
restat. Apost.

Art. 2.

m Jud. v. 3.

n Rom. 1. 8.

If we fear God, he fears not us; if we obey God, he obeyes not us, &c. But if we love God, he sweetly closeth with us in the <sup>b</sup> same kinde, and returns it with advantage into our bosomes. A clear <sup>c</sup> prooffe of this affection was expected from none more, then from Apostles; wherefore our Saviour, to make experiment, puts Saint *Peter*, a <sup>d</sup> chief amongst them, to an interrogatory, in the same terms thrice repeated, *Joh. 21. 15, 16, 17. Simon, Son of Jonas, Lovest thou me?* Who likewise thrice appealing to Christs Omniscieny, for the truth of his inward love towards him, is required to shew it forth, by feeding of his lambs, and sheep; by that confession, or engagment, as it is were salving the wound of his three-fold denial of him; and causing his tongue (as *Augustine* observes) to serve him no less to declare his love, then it had done in disclosing his fear: To wave the mention of what heterogeneous glosses the soothing Parasites of the grand <sup>e</sup> Diotrephes of *Rome*, (that Antichristian <sup>h</sup> man of sin) impose up<sup>n</sup> this text, making what was meant only as as the <sup>i</sup> strengthening of *Peters* infirmity, (for so many fallings, so many <sup>k</sup> restorings, saith *Beza*) to to be a raising of him, with exclusion of all others, unto dignity; that, on this occasion, by the great cheat of a pretended personal (not by any intended truly <sup>m</sup> primitive <sup>n</sup> doctrinal) succession, they might, with an usurped triple crown, enthrone their visible head, and Monarch of the universal Church; and enstate him in a Primacy of Jurisdiction, and supream Domination over all other

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other Pastors, and souls whatsoever, or where-  
soever, (whereby it appears, he is like *Peter* in no-  
thing more, then in the denial of his master,)  
whereas, as *St. P. Cyprian* truly, (excepting  
sometimes, but not <sup>1</sup> alwaies, a priority of or-  
der in his nomination before them) the very same  
what *St. Peter* was, in point both of honour,  
<sup>1</sup> commission, and <sup>2</sup> power, were all the other  
Apostles.

To wave, I say, all this, (as being now en-  
diting an Epistle, not writing a treatise,) allowing  
to *Peter*, and the Apostles, as to the first Repre-  
sentatives, their extraordinary Circumstantial,  
and unimitable <sup>u</sup> priviledges, fixed to their per-  
sons only: all other <sup>\*</sup> faithful <sup>x</sup> Pastors, law-  
fully, <sup>y</sup> called, and <sup>z</sup> sent, for the ordinary sub-  
stantial of their <sup>a</sup> office, in <sup>b</sup> Preaching and  
Baptizing, &c. are enjoyned the like manifestati-  
on of the same love, to the <sup>d</sup> chief Shepherd,  
and <sup>e</sup> Bishop of souls, by the <sup>f</sup> inspection, and  
<sup>g</sup> feeding of his flock, the Church.

o 1 Pet. 5. 3.  
confert  
2 Cor. 1. 24.  
p Hoc erant usq;  
& ceteri Apo-  
stoli, quod fuis  
Petrus, pari  
consortio præditi,  
& honoris, &  
potestatis -- ex-  
ordium ab unita-  
te proficiscitur.  
S. Cyprian, de  
unitate Ecclesie,  
(c. 3. confert  
Whitaker con-  
tra Duræum, l.  
9. f. 7. Jucl  
against Hard-  
ing, part. 2. c. 3.  
Divis. 3. Mr.  
Edw. Rey-  
nolds, on Psal.  
110. p. 88. *Di-  
ctic in Festo St.  
Pauli*: with all  
the ful Chorus  
of reformed,  
Protestant Di-  
vines:

q Matth. 10. 2. r Gal. 2. 9. 2 Cor. 11. 28. s Matth. 28. 19. t Matth. 18. 18. Ioh. 20. 21.  
S. i primus ante omnes, non primarius, King James, In Apology to all Christian  
Monarchs, p. 306. 307. &c. u The Personal Priviledges of the Apostles Calling, see  
in Mr. Perkins, on Jude v. 17. and in Bilson Præf. p. 11. & c. 5. & 10. of the Per-  
petual govern. of the Church. Davenant. on Coloss. c. 1. v. 1. & p. 130, 131, 137, 152,  
170. ib. Dr. Feild, l. 1. c. 5. l. 3. c. 4. Of the Church; and Dr. Sclater on Psal. 116.  
p. 48, 104, 142. w 1 Cor. 4. 2. Matth. 25. 21. x Jer. 3. 15. y See Perkins on Isa. 6. 5,  
6. Signs of a ministers lawful calling, see in him, on Galat. c. 1. v. 1, & 11. and on  
Matth. 7. v. 16. it: Pet. Martyr. loc. com. class. 4. c. 1. Bullinger, advers. Anabapt. l. 3.  
c. 4. Non sunt audiendi, nisi vocati, Gerson. part. 3. de vitâ Spirit. Comad. Dieteric.  
In Festo St. Andreæ. Dr. Sclater, on Psal. 116. p. 142, 143. z Jer. 23. 31. Ioh. 17. 18.  
Rom. 10. 15. Heb. 5. 4. a Rom. 11. 13. 1 Tim. 3. 1. b Matth. 28. 19, 20. Mar. 16. 15,  
16. Rom. 10. 14. Joh. 17. 20. c Joh. 14. 15. d 1 Pet. 5. 4. e 1 Pet. 2. 25. f Act.  
20. 28. g 1 Pet. 5. 2.

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This well knew the Author of this ensuing Commentary, (my dear, and reverend father) who seeing the way thus lead before him, strove to walk after in the very path, though he reach'd not, happily, the same large steps; and hath given ample expressions, after his <sup>h</sup> measure, of his love, (the chief <sup>i</sup> motive of his ministerial undertakings) to Christ, by his triple feeding both of his lambs, and sheep; to wit. 1. By word. 2. By life. 3. By writing. For so did this great Apostle, with the rest: To those Churches which they planted, Preaching, *tam vivâ (quod aiunt) voce, quam per Epistolas, postea*, as <sup>k</sup> *Tertullian* speaketh; as well by their Epistles, absent, as by their lively voyces, present: They delivered precepts both of doctrine, and manners, *ἐν λόγῳ καὶ ἐν ἔργῳ*, as *Chrysostome* saith, both without writing, and with it; the which is also insinuated by *St. Paul*, 2 *Thess.* 2. 15. where he exhorts his *Thessalonians* to stand fast, and hold the traditions (to wit of doctrine) which they had been taught, by word, or their Epistle. And, indeed, in its degree, a man may *ἐν λόγῳ τὸν λόγον κυρύνειν*, as <sup>m</sup> *Clemens Alexandrinus* phraseth it; Preach, as, by his tongue; so, by his pen. *David* compared his tongue to the <sup>n</sup> pen of a ready writer, that what he spake might, as <sup>o</sup> a written letter, <sup>\*</sup> last; and as the Spirit is said to (speak) expressly; so is the Scripture, that is the [written] word, to <sup>p</sup> (say): A writer is a silent, as a speaker is a vocal Orator. Either sanctified, winneth glory to the Lord, and much advantage to the Church of Christ, *faxit.*

Now

*b* Eph. 4. 7.  
2 Cor. 10. 13.  
*c* 2 Cor. 5. 14.

*k* Tertullian  
de Præscript.  
advers. Hæret.  
c. 21.

*l* Rom. 6. 17.  
So Dr. Fulk  
expounds it,  
against the  
Rhemists, num.

17. on 2

Thess. 2.

<sup>\*</sup> Chrysost.

Hom. 4. in 1

Thess. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Clemens  
Alexandr. l. 1.  
Strom. See  
Eccles. 12. 10.

<sup>n</sup> Psal. 45. 1.

<sup>\*</sup> *littera scripta  
manet.*

<sup>o</sup> 1 Tim. 4. 1.

*ἐν ᾧ λέγει.*

*ὅτι γὰρ (λέγει)*

Jam. 4. 5.

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Now, it may be thought not well becoming me, or, at all, my Herauldry to blazon the coat of my fathers graces, the crest whereof is glory : Perhaps, it might be [lawful] for me, (who knew him both in word, in life, in writings, better, then another did, or could;) but, as the Doctor of the Gentiles, said of his own rapture, and visions, <sup>οὐκ ἔστιν</sup> It is not [ ] expedient] doubtless, for me to glory ; though, after *Solomons* expression, such a Father may be my glory : Let his own works praise him in the Gates : he was a fair Copy for me to write after ; and, as its written of righteous *Abel*, *He being dead, yet speaketh* ; and what saith he : Surely, me-thinks, as the ghostly Father of *Timothy*, to him, *2 Tim. 3. 10, 14. Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, &c. Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them ; now, my own desires, and endeavours are, that, as I resemble him (they say) in* \* visage, as a son by natural birth ; so, I may do likewise, in religious imitation ; adding only (as in all dutiful acknowledgments) of him what *Nazianzen* wrote, as an Epitaph, on his *Basil*.

*Βροσὴ τοῦ λόγου, ἀνεροπὴ τε βίης.*

His doctrine was thunder, and his life lighting ; the one to startle sinners rock't asleep in security ; the other, to shine before good eyes, and to dazle others, who shun'd illumination. He was in his native disposition, as *Moses*, abounding in mansuetude, and \* meekness ; yet, in the cause of Christ, \* mighty in words, and deeds : So that

q 2 Col. 12. 1.

v Prov. 17. 6.  
f Prov. 31. 31.

t Heb. 11. 4.

\* Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat. Virgil. *Æn.* 3. de Astyanact.

Hectoris filio. \* Job. 8. 39. See this book. c. 2. v. 8. p. 78, 79, 80, 81, and him also, on Psa. 116. p. 174, 175.

u March. 5. 16.

\* Num. 12. 3. x A. 6. 7. 22.



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y Prov. 10.

that my hope is, the memory of him, as of a just man, both is, and shall be blessed.

And I am the rather induc'd to think so, for that in the perusal of divers Modern writers, I finde him quoted often, as an approved Textuary, and of a sound judgment, in those Scriptures, and Sermons, which he undertook to treat of; some whereof were set forth and revised by himself, in his own life time; some published by me, since his decease.

As concerning this book, which I thought meet to style, [A brief commentary, with notes, on the Prophet *Malachy*,] the materials of it were meditated, and Preached, some years before his death; (of whom, what concerneth mine own private estate, I say no more, but as *Philip* sayd of *Hipparchus* being gone, *Sibi maturè, mihi citò*, he dyed in a good time for himself, but for me, too-soon:) but, as the Hebrewes are wont to express that in the <sup>2</sup> præter-tense, which was to be accomplished in the future, thereby denoting the certainty of what they foretell; so what was uttered by him, as in Exposition of this Prophècie, for divers yeares past, was as an apt mould for these very times: He was no Prophet, or Prophets son, much less a favourer of bold <sup>\*</sup> *Enthusiasmes*, or a pretender to extraordinary <sup>a</sup> revelations, under a constitution of <sup>\*</sup> ordinary means <sup>b</sup> by God. Yet certainly, as *Aristotle* (the Patriarch of Philosophers) writes of some, that they have *quædam naturæ et temporis*, as it were forespeaking, and (after *Zanchy's* <sup>b</sup> expression) præsagient, con-

<sup>2</sup> In prophetis præteritum pro futuro poni crebriò solet. Joh. Drusius. Lect. in Obad. v. 7.

<sup>\*</sup> Contra Enthusiastas lege Bulling. l. 2. c. 1. adv. Anabapt. & Dieteric. In serm. 3a. Penscolt.

a 2 Cor. 12. 1.

<sup>\*</sup> See 1 Tim. 4.

13.

<sup>\*</sup> See Dr. Sclater, on Psal.

116. v. 13. p.

127, 128.

<sup>b</sup> Zanch. de Divinatione. per Insom. p. 163.

2.

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conjecturing natures, *peculiari vi* <sup>ε σοχαστικῇ</sup> *fulu-ros eventus presagientes*, as *Conradus Dietericus* hath it; so surely, (finding withal, in experience, the <sup>d</sup> secret of the Lord to be with him) God gave him a <sup>c</sup> foreseeing eye, and by a prudent, yea Political observation of Gods exemplary dealings with other Nations, and Churches (sinning, or reforming,) seemed to discover, how the pulse of this land began to beat, and by foregoing symptoms guessed at the approaching disease, that was growing upon this Church, and State; and which, since, in great measure, hath broken out.

For the style, it might, in all likelihood, have been better polished, if he had surviv'd to have drawn his last, and smoothest hand over it; yet, to any who have pleased to be conversant in his other writings, it shall be found alike, that is, as himself was, somewhat after the stature of *Zachens*, <sup>f</sup>short, curt, and strict, though withal full, and clear: And indeed sententiousness, not loquacity, in serious Theology, is to be preferred.----ἐμπρο-  
χάδην ἀγόρευς

Πᾶρα μὲν, ἀλλὰ μάλα λιγέως.

His skill was somewhat choyce in searching, and springing the mine of an intricate, obscure scripture, sparing no devotion, or Logick, til he had found out the right veine, where the treasure lay hid. And, in this respect, he hath been heard to say, that he would [warily] adventure to start the hare with any man; which done, a common ingenuity may finde scope enough to pursue a text.

b

For

<sup>c</sup> *Conrad. Dietericus Domini-  
cā post Cuchm-  
cis. Domini:*  
*NUM. 4.*  
<sup>d</sup> *Psal. 25. 14.*  
*Prov. 3. 32.*  
<sup>e</sup> *Prov. 22. 3.*

<sup>f</sup> *Luk. 19. 3.*

<sup>g</sup> *Homer Il. 2.*

*ἔκιστα ἰδίῳ  
εἰ τοῦ μίγα ἴδ, δλ-  
λα τοῦ μίγα,*



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For the method, it's for the Chapters themselves, at large, Analytical; for the Practical observations thence deduced, synthetical; disposed for the best advantage, both of the memories, and hearts of those plain people that heard him.

The scope is, to discover Gods judgments in the causes; and withal, to hold forth means of prevention, or removal, in their due application.

Having, on these, and the like considerations, pondered in my secret thoughts the usefullness of this work, I was fully purposed to prepare it for the press, and to let it see the light. Yet, because (amidst so great Atheism abroad, that now, as *Jacob* did *Esau*, hath taken the general <sup>h</sup> infatuation by the <sup>i</sup> heel; insomuch, that the <sup>k</sup> power of godliness being long since lost, now, the very outward form is hardly to be found;) Foggy, and (wo is me!) too much uncontrolled errors <sup>l</sup> in this dotage of the world; arising like those <sup>m</sup> *Locusts* out of the bottomless pit, have damp'd the ancient zeal, and, as the <sup>n</sup> worm in *Jonah's* gourd, eaten out the very sap, and vigor of almost all right holiness:

For this cause, a patron must of necessity be sought to perfect this helpless *posthume* from the injuries of an <sup>o</sup> untoward generation. And, to shelter a [pious] discourse, I quickly knew where to finde one, a very neer neighbour; even your self, (most worthy Sir:) A Gentleman, 'twixt whom, and the Authour, there did ever pass, constantly

*b* Isa. 6. 10.  
*i* Gen. 25. 26.  
*k* 2 Tim. 3. 5.

*l* *Mundus senescens patitur phantasias*;  
*Gerson.*  
*m* Rev. 9. 3.  
*n* Jon. 4. 7.

*o* Act. 2. 40. &  
Philip. 2. 15.

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stantly, so dear and affectionate a reciprocation of most cordial, and religious respects. I cannot but well hope from so much candor, and gravitie, for a courteous entertainment of a suitor that comes thus [in his name] to *Bradfield*. And the rather, for that I have been informed of your Noble acknowledgments, that *Doctor Sclater's* ministry was, under God, one of the [first] means of your calling, at least, of your firmer establishment, in your first, right wayes of truth, and godlines; insomuch, that I begin to think, on a sudden, you might personally be an Auditor of some of these very Sermons, the sum whereof I now crave the favour to present you with: nor do I question, but that your inward experience of the comforts of \* those dayes, occasioneth, even yet, (whereof I rejoyce) so daily mention, and so honourable a commemoration of his name, at your refections, deambulations, conferences.

How willingly (had I any tolerable skill in the musick of Oratory) could I now strike the sweet strings, and sound the pleasant Notes of your due prayses; the garlands whereof about your Temples, like the trees of *Alcinous*, are ever green, and not suffered to flag or wither through any defect of the radical moysture of Divine graces. But herein, me-thinks, I am as in a strait betwixt two; affraid, on the one side, of the *Scilla* of mine own insufficiencies; your perfections, as if in the very Tropick of *Cancer*, are advanced to so great an height, that if I should speak of them in

\* The work  
of the Lord  
was precious  
in those dayes,  
as 1 Sam. 3. 1.  
See p. 79. of  
this book.

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\* De quo non  
possum ita mag-  
nifice loqui, id  
circa quia  
supereterna;  
Terent.

p Eccles. 43. 7.  
q Laudator qua-  
si, adulator.  
i. a. p.

\* Vir justus  
quanto perfecti-  
or efficitur, tan-  
to in oculis suis  
minuitur.

Peraldus, tom.  
2. c. 5. De vir-  
tat. & vitii.

r 1 Pet. 5. 5.  
\* 2 Chro. 12.  
11.

\* ad in iup  
Eph. 3. 8.

f Granatens.  
tom. 3. conc. de  
Temp. p. 460.  
vol 8.

t 1 Pet. 2. 9.  
u 2 Cor. 10. 18.

\* S. Clemens,  
Epist. ad Co-  
rinth. p. 50.  
edit. Oxon.

1633.  
x Davenanr.  
exposit. in Co-  
loss. c. 2. v. 5. p.

170. confer p.  
84. of this  
book.

a magnificent style, they would \* surmount the reach of my expressions : this were an alloy for an abler pen : on the other side, of the *Charybdis*, of <sup>u</sup> flattery, especially when as your piety is : cloathed with so great \* humility ; that as those who live under the Equinoctial, even at noon-day, have no shadowes at all ; so, in the very Meridian of your Sanctity, you decline your [own,] that God may have [his] glory : *quàm magnum est nolle laudari, & esse laudabilem ?* Sene-  
Yet, sith the self-depressing \* Apostle would

ca.  
have his Converts to minde, *ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ*, due praise, Phil. 4. 8. and as <sup>i</sup> *Granado* observes, in praising of good men, we, in them, honour the God of such men, when we shew forth the ver-  
tues, or praises of him who hath called them : and though an humble man be shy of giving eu-  
logies of <sup>u</sup> himself ; yet, as St. *Clement*, \* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians* (a genuine piece of an-  
tiquity lately come to our hands) hath it, *ἐὰν ὁ ἑτέρου ἑαυτὸν μαρτυρεῖσθαι*, let him permit another to  
give testimony of him ; this kinde of laudation being (saith a reverend \* Bishop) but an artificial,  
or effectual perswasion to persevere in things all-  
ready praise-worthy ; thereby, withal, to testifie  
good affection, and to hold out the lamp of their  
vertuous lives unto others : In this case, (as *Au-  
stin* speaks in the matter of commending the dead)  
*nec laudantem adulatio movet, nec laudatum tentat  
elatio*, neither adulation may justly be imputed to  
the praiser, nor Elation to the praised.

And,

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And, on this Apology, I must acquaint the world, that my Rhetorick would here fail me, before matter, the \* copiousness whereof hath brought upon me a penury of language, to embellish it : However, sith my self have seldom departed from you, without some improvement of *Holiness* by you, I cannot forbear to break my box of prayſes, as of ſo much ſpikenard, to perfume the Age with the mention of your Vertues ; and that, if not in proportion to your \* merit, yet in ſome meaſure to mine own deſires.

Loe ! from a living root of worthineſs, there have ſprang forth from you, by an happy vegetation, various branches of very eximious qualifications, being made conſpicuous, and to be ſeen.

1. In Artificial inventions.
  2. In Civil moralities.
  3. Oeconomical decorum's.
  4. In Political adminiſtrations.
- And (as the crown and glory of all theſe.)
5. In religious devotion.

For the firſt, ſo ſingular in the univerſality of them, as if the Univerſal had been but one ſingular: as to another *Bezaleel*, a ſpirit is given you to y  
deviſe cunning works, in all manner of workmanſhip ; and as ſome Chriſtian *Archimedes*, no engine, or inſtrument, for contrivance, or motion, exceeds your ſkill : even the moſt extravagant Element, the water, is taught, to make melody, yea reſpaſt, and delight for moſt of the ſenſes : Yet all this, as being far beneath your

\* *Inopem me  
copia fecit.*

\* *Quod ſi dig-  
na tua minis  
eſt mea pugna  
laude, At vo-  
luiffe ſat eſt.  
Lucan. in pane-  
gyr. ad Calpurn.  
Piſonem.*

y *Exod. 31. 3. 4.*

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better thoughts, is made the business but of your spare, successive hours; and regarded only as your recreations.

For the second, the whole train of Moral Virtues, as those Virgins did on the Kings daughter, deck't in their fairest ornaments, attend you; such are Temperance, Sobriety, Justice, affability, &c.

For the third, as God hath given you a fruitful vines, so your children stand, *like Olive plants*, about your table; your quiver is become full of those arrows, which the Lord is pleased to account his own heritage, and his reward: all these, with your household, as if by a kinde of sacred *inseparableness* *Abraham's* religiousness had, indeed, transmigrated into your breast, you command<sup>b</sup> to keep the way of the Lord; and they all again, by beholding your<sup>c</sup> orderly, and constant ensample, are, as it were, piously charmed into a zealous<sup>d</sup> imitation, like those twelve tribes, *Act. 26. 7. Instantly serving God, day and night*: And, which is very remarkable, (as being indeed the very Diamond set in the ring of Gods favours on you) in so fair a Pomegranate, no one grain is found tainted: No one, among so numerous an offspring, debauched. He, I am sure, who survives as your first-born<sup>e</sup> son, and is, as *Jacob* said of *Reuben*, your<sup>f</sup> strength, the honour of his house, and the hopes of his Country, a gentleman of elegant learning, refined parts, and of eminent sanctity, well leads the way to all the rest; so that I may hither apply what that Heroick Poet sang of these golden branches pluck'd

2

<sup>r</sup> Psal. 45. 14.

3.

<sup>a</sup> Psal. 127, 128.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. 18. 19.

<sup>c</sup> Coloss. 2. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Joh. 8. 39.  
As Ulysses of  
his family, to  
quip *Ajax*,  
*neque in his*  
*quisquam dam-*  
*natus, & exul.*  
<sup>e</sup> Mr. William  
Walrond.  
<sup>f</sup> Gen. 49. 2.

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

pluck'd off; if the one failed, another sprang up forthwith in the same place.—\* *Uno avulso, non deficit aliter.*

*Aureus, & simili frondescit virga metallo.*

For the fourth; you have been known, for many yeers past, to resemble, in your practice, *Fe- thro's* magistrate, which hath made you long a stay to these parts; and as *Herod* was <sup>h</sup> afraid of *John Baptist*, for his holiness, so hath lewdriess been, of your justice; as, on the other side, religion found both countenance, and encouragement from you: but, that which my self (and as I believe, with me, many others) have with some specialty, noticed, is; that, as you have <sup>i</sup> feared an oath your self, so to persons whom you have discovered tender, ignorant, or rash, you have forbidden to load them with a publique oath: which cautelousness if some had equally observed, many consciences had, probably, been less guilty of the breach of the <sup>k</sup> third Commandment; and the land not <sup>l</sup> mourned so long because of unlawful, and (alas! how often?) contradictory swearing.

The last, which as King *Lemuel's* daughter <sup>m</sup> excelleth all the former, is your religious devotion: he that runs may read this, in your awful, yet serene \* countenance, the clear index of a mortified soul; God hath poured upon you a choyce spirit of <sup>n</sup> supplications; you are, in the scriptures, an <sup>o</sup> *Apollon*; to the <sup>p</sup> men of God, faithful ministers, a <sup>q</sup> *Gaius*; of such guests your hospitality is seldom unfurnished: A bemoaner, no fomentor of the great divisions of the times, for which, (ah me!) as

\* Virgil. *Aen.*  
6.

4

g *Exod.* 18. 21.

b *Mat.* 6. 20.

i *Eccles.* 9. 2.

k *Exod.* 20. 7.

l *Jer.* 23. 10.

5.

m *Prov.* 31. 29.

\* *Cujus vultum  
nec fuscavit  
maior, nec levigavit  
visus,*  
*Bern. de S.*  
*Martino.*

n *Zech.* 12. 10.

o *Act.* 18. 24.

p 2 *Tim.* 3. 17.

2 *Pet.* 1. 21.

of



*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

r Judg. 5. 15.

f Psal. 122. 1

t Heb. 10. 25.

u Matth. 5. 16.

\* Matth. 6. 6.

\* Gen. 24. 63.

\* Gen. 5. 24.

y Phil. 3. 20.

z Matth. 6. 10.

a Gen. 7. 1.

b 1 Theff. 4. 1.

i Col. 15. 58.

c Phil. 3. 9.

d 1 Pet. 2. 12.

Jam. 3. 13.

of old, for those of *Renben*, there are so great thoughts and impressions of heart : an honourer, promoter, and a strict observer of Gods publique ordinances; ' glad of occasions to frequent the ' Assemblies; and not only so, [for an example] to be <sup>u</sup> seen; but your \* closet is a Temple for Divinity. And now also, as *Isaac* had his \* field, so have you your garden of delight, a retreat for holy meditations; that so, as *Enoch*, in devout soliloquy's, you might \* walk, and converse with God; having your <sup>y</sup> conversation in Heaven, even whilst you are on <sup>z</sup> earth; as some Christian *Scipio*, *nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus*, being never less alone, then when you are alone : And, as the richest Carbuncles shine best in varied, or dusky lights; so doth your sanctimony, in an age so over-cast with black, and pitchy clouds of all variety of most fowl enormities; as it more commended *Noah* to be righteous before God, even in that very <sup>a</sup> generation, when sin as a deluge, had over-flown the whole world, and [al] flesh *had corrupted his way upon the earth*, Gen. 6. 12. But, this is so well known to all, that I may seem to do a wrong, in making them onlie as my own private notices.

To conclude; (for I fear my self to have exceeded the measure of an Epistle:) thus adorned with Gods graces, it shall be your comfort, yea your glory, to abound *more and more*; and though, (as you once told me your self) you are not for the <sup>c</sup> righteousness of works; yet persist still (I beseech you) in the works of righteousness: Put on these; they shall be, not only as white rayment to cloath



# *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

cloath you ; but also τὰ ὅπλα τῆ φάσος, as the [ar-  
mour] of light, even armour of prooffe, to de-  
fend, and guard you againſt the [hurt] of what-  
ſoever evil may affault you ; albeit they are not,  
as Bernard truly, *Cauſa Regnandi*, the cauſe of  
reigning ; notwithstanding you ſhall finde them to  
be, *via regni*, the <sup>k</sup> evidences of your Faith, the  
fruites of your Election, and the <sup>m</sup> way ordain-  
ed of God to walk directly in, to the Kingdom of  
Heaven : To the full fruition of which kingdom,  
that you may full of dayes, and in a good old age,  
accompanied with a lively faith, and a clear con-  
ſcience, be advanced ; (deſiring withal the favour  
of your Hereditary reſpects,) is, and ſhall be the  
ſervent prayer of, Sir,

*Your ſervant in the Lord  
Chriſt, to be commanded.*

*From my ſtudy in  
Collompton, Sept.  
1. 1648.*

*William Sclater.*

2 Rev 3.18.  
/ Rom.13.12.  
g *Eſt.10. ad*  
Rom.13.12.  
h 1 Pet.3.13.

1ſa.26.12.

4 Jam.2.18.  
/ Eph.1.4.  
Tit.2.14.  
2 Pet.1.10.  
m Eph.2.10.

n Col.4.12.

TO



To all Christian, and charitable Readers:  
but, with more Specialty, to my loving Countrymen, the Parishioners of *Pittminster*, in the County of *Sommerſet*, who yet ſurviving reſent with due reſpects the memory of their too ſoon deceaſed Paſtor, *Doctor Sclater*, the Author of this Book.



Having, nigh about two yeares ſince, re-  
viſed ſome Manuſcripts of my Fa-  
thers, I found theſe papers, which are  
now expoſed to the publique uſe,  
written in a ſmall, and ſomewhat an  
obſcure Character, inſcribed *Sermo-  
nes Dominicales*, Sermons upon the Prophet *Malachy*,  
Preached on the Lords dayes, began *Febrüary*  
the nineteenth, 1608. In the peruſal of them, I per-  
ceived that the diſcourſe therein might not be imperti-  
nent, but rather ſeaſonable for theſe latter times: And,  
out of a ſerious deſire to do good, having obſerved a  
fair reception of ſome other of his works, publiſhed  
ſince his death, by me, (a catalogue whereof I ſhall now  
give you) I immediately reſolved upon a tranſcription:  
which being finiſhed, and in ſome order digeſted, was  
tendered to the liſenſe; but could not, through the in-  
terveniencie of new commotions, be well put the Preſs,  
till now.

As

## To the Reader.

As for the Author, his other writings have made him known; and in this brief comment, upon this Prophet, he hath delivered his judgment, Orthodoxly, and so consentient to Divine Truth, that what was written of Rabanus Maurus, (sometimes Archbishop of Mentz) by him, who set out his Commentaries upon Jeremy, may be hither applyed; Facile est colligere, vel ex hoc uno Authore, Spiritum sanctum nunquam suam deseruisse Ecclesiam, it may be easily collected, though but from this one Author, that the Holy Spirit hath not <sup>a</sup> forsaken his Church, no not in the worst times, but hath <sup>b</sup> enabled, and raised up faithful labourers, <sup>c</sup> sending them forth into his own great harvest.

Let not this posthume little Volume of his be thought spurious, for that it hath lain so long concealed, tw<sup>as</sup> not of shame to shew it's face; but for that, perhaps, in so quaint an Age, it wanted better garments; at least, some trimming upon it's plain cloth: in totter'd times, it may hope to pass, though in an homely, yet in an untorn garb: in short, the watch may be of good materials, albeit the maker of it be by time prevented for to crave, or to enamel it: I shall desire the Reader, now, to view truth, in this Book, as in it's first naked simplicity, without the dressings, or curlings, or ornaments of Rhetorick, which like to painted glass in a fair window, often hinder the native beauty of the purer light.

I have, in a specialty of respect, directed it unto the place of my own Natiuity, as by a kinde of natural instinct, to declare, (as Ulysses sometimes did after his Ithaca,) how I <sup>c</sup> long after the <sup>d</sup> prosperity thereof

a Psl. 89. 33.  
b 1 Tim. 1. 12.  
c Math. 9. 37,  
38.  
d 2 Chro. 36.  
15. & Math.  
10. 5.

e Phil. 1. 8.  
2 Cor. 9. 4.  
f 3 Epist. Joh.  
2.

## To the Reader.

\* Gal. 3. 1.

g 1 Cor. 3. 10.  
2 Cor. 13. 10.  
Jude v. 20.  
h psal. 89. 50.  
i 1 Cor. 4. 15.  
and as he  
might have  
said. Isa. 8. 18.  
Behold me  
and the chil-  
dren whom  
the Lord hath  
given me. See  
pag. 5 on 2  
Theff.  
k See Gal. 4.  
14. 15.  
\* Gal. 4. 19.  
l 2 Cor. 2. 9.

m Ezek. 2. 2.

n Col. 2. 5.

o Rom. 10. 1.

p 2 Theff. 2. 2.

q Marth. 7. 25.

r Jer. 6. 16.

s 1 Cor. 3. 11.

thereof, and partly, for that a present of this nature, brought them as a legacy from their dead Pastor, chiefly, when their own \* eyes have seen, or their hearts felt the actual accomplishment of what was in these, as in other Sermons, so long ago fore-shewn them; this may haply revive his memory afresh among them, and therewith also some new thanks to God, for the advantage of those labours, whereby they were s edified in the faith of Christ.

I perswade my self, that there are yet among you some, who bear in your <sup>h</sup> bosomes a witness, that tels your souls, what St. Paul did, sometime, to his soon-forgetting Corinthians though you have had many instructors in Christ, yet have you not had many <sup>i</sup> Fathers, for in Christ Jesus he hath begotten you, through the Gospel: Now some have thought, that men do <sup>a</sup> owe (at least respectively) more to their \* spiritual, than to their natural Parents; by how much more heavenly the <sup>e</sup>cond is, then the first Birth, and the regeneration of the precious Soul to be preserved to the generation of the Body: what testimony or prooffe you have given of such an apprehension, your selves best know.

For my self, though I cannot have personal addresseees to <sup>m</sup> drop among you my word, as an Eccho to the old voyce; yet am I with you in the Spirit: and my hearts desire, and pr. yer to God, for you all, both is, and shall be, that you may not be shaken (no not under the strongest gusts of temptations, in <sup>s</sup> ese speckled times of so many movly opinions) from those ancient, fundamental truths, wherewith, under his ministrei, your souls were once well ballasted. the skill of the seaman

To the Reader.

is best discovered in a storm : As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted, and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving : I conclude all, with that advice of St. Paul to his Philippians, Chapter the fourth, verse the ninth : Those things which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.

Col. 2.6,7.

What endeavours I have used in this publication, let them be entertained in good part, Gods Name be glorified; you, and the Church of Christ benefited thereby, so shall I be abundantly satisfied, as who am,

Your affectionate well-willer  
in the Lord Christ,

From my study in  
Collompton. Sept.  
1. 1649.

William Sclater;

Imprimatur, Edmond Calamy

A Catalogue of such Books, or  
Sermons, as were published in the  
Life-time of this Authour.

1. **A**N Exposition on the three first Chapters to the *Romans*.
2. An Exposition, with Notes, on both Epistles to the *Thessalonians*.
3. Three Sermons; The one styled, the sick souls salve, on *Prov.* 18. 14. The other, the Christians strength, on *Philip.* 4. 13. The third, the Ministers Portion, on *1 Cor.* 9. 13, 14. which was enlarged into a treatise, wherein is handled the question of Tythes.

*Books of his, set forth by me, since his decease.*

1. **T**Hree Sermons; the one, on *1 Pet.* 2. 11. Styled, the Spiritual warfare; the other, on *2 King.* 9. 31. Preached on the Gunpowder Treason; the third, on *Heb.* 9. 27. A Funeral Sermon on his Patron.
2. An *Analytical* Exposition on both Epistles to the *Corinthians*, in Latine, Printed at *Oxford*.
3. Sermons, experimental, on *Psalms.* 116. Meditated, and Preached by him, after his recovery



from a dangerous sickness, and his being stricken with the fit of an Apoplexy, when actually Preaching in his Pulpit, at *Pitmister*.

4. Now, his brief Commentary, with Notes, on the Prophet *Malachy*; of which I have said a few words, in my Epistle Dedicatory.

5. An Exposition on the fourth Chapter to the *Romans*, in an addition to the former three already set out, is now prepared for the Press, a Scholastical, and elaborate piece.

6. Some remainders there yet are of his lucubrations upon good part of the *Revelation*, and some more Scriptures competently entire, besides other things, which as the parcels of a broken Picture, express the Authours gravity, and diligence: More may be hereafter published, if these finde welcome, or, if industry, and learning, meet with encouragements.



# Errata.

**P** Age 14. line 2. for works, r. makes. p. 15. l. 19. for Election, r. Reprobation. p. 20. l. 30. for denied, r. decreed. p. 21. l. 23. for security, r. scarcity. p. 37. for Matth. 21. 12. r. 43. p. 41. l. 21. Of inheritance, aboundeth, & l. 35. for thou, r. though. p. 52. l. 24. r. all the world for a (good) conscience. p. 66. l. 30. put, for veris, 15. v. 12. p. 71. l. 30. for v. 28. put, v. 20. p. 74. l. 13. for Mark. 15. r. 14. and l. 26. ib. for v. 18. put, v. 13. p. 82. l. 26. for seems, r. serves. p. 89. l. 20. r. (to) bribery. p. 90. l. 20. r. covering p. 93. l. 28. for like, r. light esteem and, l. 36. for pleaseth, r. pleased. p. 94. l. 1. for bath, r. had. p. 96. l. 5. for I be, r. thee. p. 97. l. 4. for bearded, r. hardened. p. 99. l. 17. for Job 21. r. 31. p. 100. l. 2. r. Psal. 32. p. 10. l. 36. for Inferiours Authority, r. Superiours. for p. 114, 115. r. 106, 107. p. 108. l. 21. r. I know not what. & l. 27, 12. Put, 2. 19. & l. 29. for oak, r. sloak. p. 109. l. 23. for Andy, r. An. p. 111. l. 15. for continuante, r. continuance. p. 112. l. 31. 2 Tim. 4. 2. p. 117. l. 1. r. 2 Tim. 2. 24. p. 118. l. 13. for yet, r. ye. p. 119. l. 24. for hem, r. them. p. 123. l. 35. r. and, for an. p. 126. l. 21. for work, p. r. worship. also. p. 127. l. 15. p. 135. l. 25. r. seasonable. p. 136. l. 14. for wast, r. shalt. p. 138. l. 20. r. (to) be your Saviour. p. 142. l. 28. Of, abundat. p. 148. l. 29. r. bring them up. p. 156. l. 22. is, abundat. p. 162. l. 20. for amangst, r. amongst. p. 182. l. 15. r. who is not (with) him. p. 200. l. 19. r. converted.



CHAP. I. VER. I.

**F**Or the Argument, it matters not much to speak;  
it is well given in our English Bibles.

The Book hath these parts,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ Inscription, } v. 1. \\ 2 \text{ Oracles.} \end{array} \right.$

### 1. Commminatory:

2. Consolatory, *cap.* 3.4.

wherein

Causes,  
Judgements,  
Admonitions pre-  
scribing remedies.

In the Inscription are these particulars :

I. The Denomination of the Book ; *Onus verbi  
Jehova, The burden of the word of the Lord.*

2. The Subject, or Persons to whom it was sent,  
to *Israel*.

3. The Person, by whose Ministry it was delivered,  
*Malachy.*

Of the first, The name of the Prophecie ; *The burden of the word of the Lord* ; So called, not in respect of *Malachy*, as *Lyra*, but in respect of *Israel* : *Lyra* thus, *Onus*,

*id est, officium denunciandi verbi Divini*, The office of denouncing the word of God; but amiss, For, *Israel* were they that were to beare this burden: *Malachy*, but the Minister to denounce it.

But so, I take it, is this Prophecy called, of the greater part of the Contents thereof, *viz.* The Judgments and Afflictions which the Lord was now about to impose upon *Israel* for their transgressions; *Metaphora*, compare *Isa. 13. 1.* The burthen of *Babel*. *Isa. 15. 1.* of *Moab*. *Isa. 17. 1.* of *Damascus*. *Nah. 1. 1.* of *Nineveh*, *Zech. 12. 1.* so the sense is this, The Judgements or Afflictions which the Lord, by *Malachy*, denounceth against *Israel*: As if he had said, The burthen of every Impenitent sinner, is fire and Brimstone; The burthen of a drunkard is to be cloathed with Rags, to have share with Hypocrites in the Lake; The burthen of an Usurer, to have his substance taken from his Posterity; Of a Sabbath-breaker, to have a fire kindled in his Gates, &c.

And that they are justly called Burthens, appears, because they presse, and oppresse him that they light on; See even *David*, Gods own Child, *Thine a hand is heavy upon me*; And again, *My sins*, (that is, Thy wrath which for my sins I apprehend, is gone over my head, and) are like a fore<sup>b</sup> burthen too heavy for me to beare; In which sense is that to be meant, *Gen. 4. 13.* *My sin*, that is, my punishment, greater than I can beare. And, *Gal. 6. 5.* Every man shall beare his own burthen.

First then here see, that sin is no such light matter as the world commonly esteems it; it brings with it a burthen intolerable, even a load of Gods wrath to every man that continues obstinately and securely in it: Beloved, we have a Proverb concerning unprofitable Talk, it is called Light talk; and so it is indeed, more light than vanity it self, if we respect the weight of profit it should carry with it: but heare what our Saviour saith, *Mat. 12. v. 36.* Idle words are accountable; nay, more than this, what

Obsev.

a Psal. 32. 4.

b Psal. 38. 4.

Use 1.



what think ye of gross Oaths ? Words are but wind. What of whoredome ? A trick of youth. What of drunkenesse ? It is merriment and good fellowship, &c. Yea, what sin so heavy, that to our people seems not light, because they never saw the burthen of Gods wrath that is due unto it ? Now Brethren, consider these light sins, they have a burthen coming after them, even the burthen of Gods heavy and intollerable wrath ; and let us come to weigh it, as it is, in the ballance of Gods Sanctuary ; It hath made Gods Children to cry out under the sense thereof ; Yea, our Saviour Himself, under the sins of others ; take it with the wrath of God, and the Curse due unto it : Children were wont to have a Riddle, *What is heavier than Lead ?* Here we find *Sin*, See *Zech. 5. 8.*

Secondly, Be hence admonished to take heed of sin, even of every one, seeing none so light but brings this Burthen. Beloved, It is the fashion of profane men, to make Gods Children as wonderments for Preciseness, when as they run not with them to the same excess of Riot ; not to drink with good fellows ; not to talk much, that is, vainly, or filthily ; no sport on the Sabbath, &c. too precise : O Beloved, had you felt what Gods Children have felt, in a measure, the burthen of Gods intollerable wrath pressing your Consciences, you would never thus speak : & if ever God open your eyes, you will befoole your selves, and bewaile your senceless estate, that having such a burthen upon you, had not grace to feele it ; but rather to encrease your Load.

Thirdly, Is it a burthen ? when thou seest any man pressed with it, favour him, help to beare his burthen by Compassion, and to lighten him of it by Consolation. In *Exod. 23.* It was the Law of God, that if a man had seen his enemies Ass, *v. 5.* lying under his Burthen, he should not forbear to help him up : hath God care of Oxen ? Or, is it not rather spoken because of us ? Beloved, we have many pressed with Afflictions : Famine, is it not a burthen ?

Use 2.

Use 3.

shall we cease to help? Agony of Conscience a burthen, shall we cease to help? *Job 6. 14.* but men have forsaken the feare of the Almighty, and are readier to add affliction; See also *Psal. 69. 26.* They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talke to the griefe of those whom thou hast wounded.

*Use 4.*

Lastly, Is it a burthen? See then the stockish senselesness of us in these Times. Beloved, The Lord hath laid load upon us long time in this Kingdome; our burthen hath been Pestilence, Famine, Inundations, unseasonable weather; yea, and yet behold the wrath of the Lord is not ceased, but his hand is stretched out still: And yet, where is that man that once entrencheth into his heart, ever to say, *c* What have I done? How have I provoked the Lord, that all this wrath is come upon me? This shews us our stupidity: And let us all be admonished to labour to feele it, lest at length it overwhelme us. The Promise is gracious, ease, and refreshing, *Mat. 11. 28.* The neglect thereof heavy, it endangereth to have the wrath of God sevenfold increased, *Lev. 26. 21.*

*c Jer. 8. 6.*

*Observ. 2.*

*Of the word of the Lord.* First, in word, before in deed, denounced ere executed: God gives warning by his Word, before he proceeds to lay on Load for our Offences; By *Noah*, a Preacher of Righteousness, to the old World; By *Lots* Example and Admonitions, to the *Sodomites*; By *Jonah*, to *Nineveh*; By all the Prophets, to *Hierusalem*.

*Reason 1.*

First, That his Children may be brought to Repentance; that the fierceness of Gods wrath may not light upon them: Beloved, it is true, such is the corruption of every man, so powerfull and prevalent the example of the most, that Gods own Children are sometimes far engaged in common corruptions; and were it not for the Lords care over them, should taste as deeply of his wrath as others; but herein appears Gods care over his own Saints, that ere he strikes, He gives warning, that by his

his word he may rouse them; that so they either may be freed from the judgements and common afflictions, or else not hurt by them, whiles by repentance they have laboured to turn the curse into a blessing, the punishment into a chastisement.

Secondly, To deprive the ungodly and obstinate offenders of excuse, and to clear the Lord of injustice and severity. See *Isa. 5. 4.* Judge, saith the Lord, what could I have done more; And *Hos. 6. 5.* What shall I do unto thee? I have cut you down by my Prophets, and hewen you by the words of my mouth, and my judgements have been in the light plainly revealed as the Sun it self; therefore Justly are you now afflicted, and left without excuse; As a good Father first admonisheth and threateneth; when that serves not, takes the Rod; See *Ezek. 2. 5.*

Doth the Lord thus, and for this end, that his children may be brought to Repentance? Well then, Beloved, Let not us crosse the Lord in his end and intention: The Lord hath thus dealt with us in this Kingdom, a long time; with us in this Congregation, now long; He hath hewen us by the words of his mouth, to make us fit stones for his building; Hence is his voice, *Harden not your hearts*, be lead to Repentance by the Word of the Lord: It is true that our sins have been grand and grievous, yet who knows, whether the Lord will repent and leave a blessing behind him? See *Jouab*, where *Nineveh* repented and found mercy; Learn by words, be as loath to bear, as the Lord is to impose the burthen of his wrath; If not, know for a certainty, the Lord will not alwaies deale by speeches; but, as he hath spoken of a burthen, so we shall feele it, if we return not.

Secondly, doth the Lord this, and for this end, that the wicked may be deprived of excuse? Then surely are we utterly excuseless, in this Kingdom and Congregation, to whom the Lord hath so mercifully vouchsafed so long admonition before-hand: justly might he send us

Reason 2.

Use 1.

d Heb. 3. 7.

Use 2.



down to the place of our Iniquity, without giving us warning; but rather would he, we should convert and live, *Ezek.* 18. If we will not heare, what excuse shall we have in the day of his fierce wrath? what will the Swearer say, &c. This be assured of, the word of God hath his work one way; if it bring thee not to repentance, yet it shall bring thee to just judgment; as the snow and raine. *Isa.* 55. 10, 11. It is the favor of life or death, *2 Cor.* 2. 16. It either captivates thy thoughts to obedience, or brings vengeance on thee for thy disobedience.

*Observ.*

A second thing here observable, is, the certainty of this judgment, for it is the burthen of the Word of the Lord; Hath he spoken it, and shall not he do it? VVas the Lord ever found false, either in threatening or promise? Peruse the whole Scripture, and see whether ever there were judgement threatened against obstinate sinners, that was not executed; see in the old world, *Hierusalem*, &c.

*Object. 1.*

*Object.* If any say, Yes, *Nineveh* was threatened, and yet escaped.

*Ans.*

*Ans.* Threatnings are all to be understood, with their condition of Repentance, *Jer.* 18. 7, 8 that performed, the judgment stayed, but yet God true in his VVord.

*Object. 2.*

*Ob.* If any shall yet say, Experience is ordinary against it, we have had Drunkards threatned with beggary.

*Ans.*

*Ans.* *Differtur non auferitur*: It follows not, because the judgment is delayed, that therefore it is wholly taken off; Some are plagued in their Posterity, *Job* 21. 19. God layeth up the sorrow of the Father for his Children: Or else, they are punished in the Equivalent, in spirituall judgments.

*Use.*

VVhat doth this teach us, but to tremble at the burthen of wrath denounced in the word of the Lord? if the burthen be of the word of the Lord, tremble at it, and feare; surely it shall come to passe, what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken: But we are fallen into a world of Despisers; as *Jer.* 23. 33, &c. VVhen the Lord had sent his Prophets



phets to tell them of the burthen of his wrath, they began to play with the word of the Lord, and scoffingly to say to the Prophets, what is the burthen of the Lord? Right after the fashion of our people, what is the burthen of the Lord? What is that Hell you so much talk of? Hearken what the Lord answers: *The burthen of the Lord ye shall mention no more; for every mans words shall be his burthen: but thus you shall say to the Prophet, what hath the Lord answered thee, and what hath the Lord spoken?* That is, whereas you now scoffe at the threatenning of the Lords Mouth, I will so press you with my judgments, that I will bring you on your knees, and make you in all humility and fear glad to heare a word of comfort, and tidings of Reconciliation from the Mouth of the Lord. Beloved, lay this to heart; It is that every man professeth, to believe the word of the Lord: yet when we come to particulars, nothing but Atheisme, and godless Infidelity.

*To Israel,* ] Gods own people; God spareth not his own Church, when he is provoked by their disobedience, See 1 Pet. 4. 17. Judgment begins at Gods house, So Jer. 25. 29.

Reasons are these: First, because amongst them, by the Lords wise dispensation, lye many wicked Hypocrites, that by their secret sins provoke Gods wrath, as *Achan*, Josh. 7. Secondly, Gods care more over them than others, *Psal.* 89. 31, 32. as a good Father over his own Child. Thirdly, To prevent scandal in the Adversaries, 2 Sam. 12. 14.

Let no man therefore presume of impunity, because he is gathered to the Church of God, and made one of his people; as the Jews, *Jer.* 7. The Temple of the Lord, That they thought was a Bulwark against all afflictions, fondly: And at this day, how take most men upon them Profession, like bankrupt Debtors a Kings Protection; as those, *Hest.* 8. became Jews, to enjoy their privileges and immunities: But Beloved, know we, God spareth

not

*Observ.*

*Reasons.*

*Use 1.*

not his own, in any age ; not *Jerusalem*, not *Israel* ; but as *David* speaks, *Psal.* 89.7. *God is very terrible in the assembly of his Saints* ; and will beare that in an Alien, what he will not beare in his own House or People ; And therefore feare we, and be not high-minded, *Rom.* 11.20.

Many excellent things are spoken of us in this Kingdom of *England*, how long we have had the Gospell amongst us, &c. How many by it converted : and this must thankfully be acknowledged : But it is but a weak consequence collected thence, therefore *England* shall be free from Gods wrath, if it provoke him : The Lord had a burthen for *Israel*, and he hath a burthen for *England* also.

Use 2.

Secondly, Doth the Lord then not spare his own people ? Much lesse then, them that are not his people ; *Jer.* 25.29. *1 Pet.* 4.17. And this should comfort Gods Children in their Chastisements, through expectation of heavy vengeance to be poured down upon the ungodly : And withall, it should terrifie ungodly men, when they see the Lords heavy wrath against his own people ; of all men, the ungodly have least cause to rejoyce in the Afflictions of Gods people ; See *Micah* 7.8,9,10.

Observ.

*Against Israel.* ] That is, against the whole people ; because generally all engaged in Transgression : so have common Transgressions common Punishments.

Object.

If any say, that the Lord promiseth deliverance out of common Afflictions and Iudgments, to his own ? *Answer*, From destruction, not from afflictions. Secondly, All these Promises are to be understood with exemption of the Cross, and chastisement for particular disobedience ; So *Lot*, *Gen.* 14. taken Prisoner amongst the *Sodomites*, to chasten his boldness in pitching his Tent amongst them, whom he knew to be such exceeding sinners against the Lord. Thirdly, Delivered out of Temptations. Fourthly, If more expedient, permitted unto them.

Answer.

Let

Let no man promise himself immunity from common judgments, who takes liberty to partake in common sins; It is just with the Lord that they should be partakers in punishment, that are partakers in transgression; And if nothing else, yet let this teach us, to beware of the common sins of the Times.

I know it is common, especially with the multitude, to do as the most do, that fewest may talk of them; and that also to avoid singularity, unjustly so censured, prevails over-much with Gods Children. Well heare, If all *Israel* sin, All must beare their burthen; yea, if Gods Children give way to like corruption, and streame of the Times, let them look for a chastisement from the hand of the Lord.

*By the hand of Malachy.*] Not to trouble you with the vaine speculations of the *Rabbins*, what this *Malachi* was, whether an Angell in an assumed body; whether *Ezra* the Scribe, and those others, of the exceeding beauty of his body; things that perhaps have some truth, but little use: It is generally received, that he was the last of the Prophets, and that he prophesied in the daies of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, as some gather by the things he specially deales against, as corruptions in marriages with Idolaters, whereof see *Ezra* 10. and *Neh.* 10.

By the Ministry of *Malachy*, not as the Executioner, but as the Denouncer.

Hence observe; That the Lord hath ordained the Ministry of his servants the Prophets, not only for Consolation of his people, by mercies: but also for their terrour, by judgments; See *Ezek.* 3. *Isa.* 6. *Ier.* 1. &c.

And this should teach us that are Ministers, to make conscience hereof; the judgement for omission is fearful, and a Note of unsoundness, *Ier.* 28. 7. And secondly, To you that are the people, Learne you to submit, not only to their Evangelical, but also, to their Legall Preachings; sharp it may seem, but surely it is wholesome: Sundry

*Observe.*

Use.

reasons there are of it. 1. It serves not to inflict, but to prevent Judgments: And it is but Satans policy to perswade the people, there cannot be love where there is severity. Cannot a Father chasten severely, and yet love tenderly? It serves likewise, secondly, To humble Gods Children. Taxed here is the over-much delicacy of our people in hearing, who are all for Mercy, Merer, Peace, Peace: whereas alas! there is no peace; as in the dayes of *Amos*, so now, *Amos* 7. 10. The Land not able to endure or bear his words: And that exception of bringing men to despaire, is frivolous; our Saviour himself, how often hath he wee, in his Mouth? And againe know we, That the best way to bring to sound hope, is first to bring to a kind of despaire, namely, In respect of our selves, or of our own sufficiency to compasse, as meetly by our selves, our own happinels.

VBR. 2, 3.

*I have loved you, saith the Lord, yet ye say wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacobs Brother? saith the Lord; Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his Mountaines and his Heritage waste for the Dragons of the wilderness.*

**T**He summe; An Expostulation with the People: And an Exprobration of their Ingratitude.

1. Gods Precession. 2. The peoples Exception.

3. The confirmation, by an argument from the effect.

*I have loved you.* Schoolemen have many curious enquiries touching Love, whether it be in God?

*Ans.* The love of God, his very Essence, *1 John* 4. 8. Yet this love in God is no Passion, but implies these three things: 1. Benevolence. 2. Beneficence. 3. Oblectation.

tion: As hatred, not to will good, to will evil, to work evil, to detest.

The peoples Exception, *Wherein hast thou loved us?* The reason of it was their Affliction by Captivity; as if it had been said, we see not, but we are afflicted as much as others; therefore thou lovest us not.

Now mark here the corruption of Nature, instigated by Satan; To conclude from Afflictions, that they are not loved: The reason is, that Carnality in every one, measuring Gods love by feeling, and Temporal blessings, whereas, it should rather be measured by Spiritual Blessings.

Take we heed of this Temptation: Satan usually labours to perswade that we are not loved; and advantage taken by afflictions, as usually as by any thing: Now, note here, for thy stablishing: 1. The Fountain of the afflictions of Gods Children, *Heb. 12. 6.* Gods Fatherly love; not so with the wicked, but in wrath. 2. In measure; See *Isa. 27. 7, 8.* *Ier. 30. 11.* & *10. 24.* 3. See the use and end of afflictions. 1. To prevent sin, *Hos. 2. 6.* *A hedge of thornes,* 2. To reduce, *Psal. 119. 67.* *Before I was afflicted, I went astray.* 3. To subdue Rebellion; mans Nature is Rebellious, Afflictions tame and subdue. 4. To quicken Gods graces in us; ease slayeth the foolish, *Pro. 1. 32.* Affliction makes grace flourish. 5. To prevent Damnation, *1 Cor. 11. 32.* And Beloved, if we had the wisdom, not to stay in our sense, but to turn our eyes to the issue, we would never thus reason.

Argument of love, thus disposed: If I have chosen you and your Fathers, and rejected your Brethren and their Fathers, then I love you; but *I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau: Ergo.* What is meant by his love, *Paul* best expounds, *Rom. 9.* of Election.

The greatest evidence of Gods love, is Election to Salvation: There is generall love to all Creatures; some token of love to *Saul*, that he was a King; but nothing to this that we are elected: all nothing without Election:

A

C 2

Wealth,

Observ.

Use.

Observ.



Wealth, and Honour, and Learning, and Authority, good Blessings, but this the depth and height of Gods love, to be chosen to Salvation. First, It is the fountain of all graces. Secondly, Of all blessings, so far as Blessings. Thirdly, Those only exempt from Condemnation. Fourthly, Heirs of glory, *Rom. 8. 17.*

*Use.*

Now then Beloved, see we, if we would know whether we be beloved of God, or no; Look, hath God elected us to Salvation? then indeed he loves us: And hence thou mayst soundly conclude, God loveth thee and holds thee deare; It is no Argument, God hath enriched me, therefore he loves me, *Eccles. 9. 1.* Outwardly all things alike; God hath advanced me, therefore he loved me; See *Saul*: called me to be a Preacher, therefore he loved me; See *Judas*: till thou comest to Election, thou hast no sound argument that the Lord loves thee; yea, what ever afflictions betide thee.

This then labour to be assured of: Two notes are, *1 Thef. 2. 13.* 1. Faith of the truth; I meane not a generall notice, or assent to the Truth, but, beleeving of the truth, in respect of thy self; when God gives thee this Particularity, and Propriety of Assurance, that is a token of Gods love and Election. 2. Sanctification of the Spirit, known by this, when thou hast ascended higher than Nature can reach unto; Nature attains to civill honesty; as were sundry Heathen famous for morall vertues, of Temperance, Justice, &c. but when the very inward affections are renewed, there is the triall of true Sanctification.

Signs of it are: 1. Hatred of sin, because it is sin; this a note of a sanctified heart, detestation of sin because sin. 2. Purging of our selves, as well from little, as from great sins, *1 Thef. 5. 22.* 3. Conscionable walking in all Gods Commandements, *Luk. 1. 6. Psal. 119.* Lastly, Hatred of the World, and Afflictions, for Righteousness sake, *Job. 15. 19. Mat. 5. 11.*



A second generall thing, how the Lord putteth difference in his Election and Love between parties neerliest conjoynd: *Eſau* *Jacobs* brother, of the ſame Parents, of the ſame Birth, Conception, yet *Jacob* loved; The like we ſee in many places; two in company, the one received, the other forſaken; two in a bed, the one received, the other reſuſed; Father ſometimes choſen, Children reſuſed, as *Abraham* and *Iſhmael*, *Iſaac* and *Eſau*, *David* and *Abſalom*.

Obſerv.

Let no man therefore pleaſe himſelf in this, that he is born of a religious Parent, or hath religious Kindred; as the Jews; *Joh.* 8. 33. They had *Abraham* to their Father, See *Mat.* 3. 9. *Think not to ſay, We have Abraham to our father*; Indeed, A bleſſing it is, to be born of religious Parents: 1. Becauſe within the outward Covenant. 2. Benefit of holy Education. 3. Vertuous Examples: but *Ezek.* 18. *If the Son ſhall turn from his Fathers vertuous example*; It is his curſe, that ever he had ſuch a Father, by conſequent. 4. Temporall mercies thou mayeſt partake by their means, as the Lord ſpeaks of *Iſhmael*, *Gen.* 17. 20.

Uſe.

Now, aſtouching Election it ſelf; for the unfolding of it, this order is obſervable; to ſhew, 1. That it is. 2. What it is. 3. Of Whom. 4. Why, or the Cauſe Motive.

For the firſt, that it is, Infinite are the places to prove it, *Mat.* 22. 14. *Few choſen*; *Mat.* 24. 24. *The Eleſt from the four corners of the World*; And it confutes that ſottiſh error of ſome, otherwiſe learned, that will have nothing determined certaine, touching mans Election, before his Birth; but that the Lord made man without determining any thing certain touching his ſinall eſtate. Object. Then vaine Holy life? *Anſw.* Not ſo, for that is the meane of attaining the right end, *Heb.* 12. 14. Object. Vaine Exhortations? *Anſw.* Not ſo, for they alſo are Means. Object. Freewill taken away, and fatall neceſſity brought

brought in? *Ans.* Necessity of Infallibility only, not forced to believe; but God that works the wills, knows how sweetly to frame and encline them.

For the second, What it is; It is an Act of God, whereby he chooseth and calleth some out of mankind, to be Heires of Salvation: Or, as *Bellarmino* well describes it; A part of Providence, whereby some certaine men are mercifully selected out of the mass of Destruction, and directed by infallible means to life eternall.

But, see, we the cause moving God thereto: False cause, Prevision of good works; that no cause, for we were predestinated to be holy, *Eph. 1. 4.* Not because we were holy; And 2. *Rom. 9.* directly excluded. 3. The very end of Election crossed, which is, to shew the works and glory of Gods grace. 4. The first cause orders the secondary, not, on the contrary; not good use of free-will foreseen; See *Ioh. 1. 13.* *Jam. 1. 18.* Regeneration not caused thereby, much less Election: Nor could any inclinableness of will be foreseen in perverse man; not Faith, for that is a fruit of Election, *Act. 13. 48.* *1 Cor. 7. 25.* And, not cause of vocation, but effect; much less of Election; Not Christ himself; Reason is; for that Christ as Mediatour, falls under decree of Election; the end first thought on before the means: True cause, the good will and pleasure of God, *Mat. 11. 26.* even because he would; and, *Rom. 9. 15.* *He hath mercy on Whom he will have mercy.*

Use.

It teacheth us to ascribe all the glory of our Election, Calling, and all fruits thereof, unto God; and still to say, that God chose me, was his grace, not my merit or obedience.

[Of whom.] *Mat. 13. 14.* Of a few, as appears by the fruits, as faith, sanctification, holy obedience; Few, not in themselves, but comparatively; as a bag of sand hath a numberless number of sand, yet in comparison of all the sands of the Sea, even as nothing: And let no man say,

This

This is hard in the Lord; for that any one is chosen, is his Free grace; and he may do with his own what him pleaseth; It is his meer good pleasure, to magnifie his grace upon his own.

First then, Follow not the Multitude, for they go the broad way. 2. Strive to enter in at the straight gate; and let this warne thee, to labour, and endeavour the more diligently to strive to make thy Calling and Election sure.

*And hate d Esau.* That is, Reprobated *Esau*: Now, that there is Reprobation, appears, because there is Election. 2. God hath not Mercy on all. 3. There are Vessels of wrath prepared to destruction, *Rom. 9: 22* and *Jude 4*. ordained to this Judgement. 4. Effects, denyall of means to many for Salvation.

If any aske what it is? Reprobation is an Act of God, whereby he determines, not to have mercy on some, but to leave them to destruction, for the glory of his justice. For the moving cause of Election, that that may be known, we are to conceive the Acts of Reprobation to be two. 1. A decree, not to have mercy; this Absolute, and hath no other cause, but the Will of God; And let none say, this is injury; for God is bound to none, *Rom. 11: 33*. therefore, Saint *Paul* refers all to Gods Will, and admires the depth of this secret, which had been vain, if the cause thereof be foresight of sin and disobedience. 2. The second Act, is ordination into punishment and Damnation; this hath some respect unto sin, being an Act of Justice, in respect of Execution: And therefore, though it be true, that God refuseth to shew mercy, only because he will; yet he ordaines no man to damnation, but for his Sin; *Judas* damned for his sin; *Comparative*, why this, not that, no other cause, but Gods Will, not according to *Of whom*. Of the greatest part of the world. Ob. Means vouchsafed to all? *Ans.* Not so, *Mat. 11: 21, 22*. and to whom vouchsafed, the end is, to deprive them

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them of excuse. Object:; Christ ransomed all? *Ans.* Not so, *Joh. 17. 9.* Inst. 1 *Pet. 2.* *Ans.* The place to be understood, of the Power of a Master over his Servant.

Ob. Then God cause of Damnation? *Ans.* Deficient, not Efficient, being not bound; besides, betwixt the Decree and Execution comes sin. Marvaile not at this, That the most part of the world believe not, nor are converted; God hath armed us against this Temptation. 2. See here the endless love of God to us whom he hath chosen; that leaving many, nay, the more part, that had deserved as much as we, yet chose us and left them. Signs: 1. Denyall of means finall. 2. Cursing of the means unto them, *Isa. 6. 10.* 3. Their own contempt of the means vouchsafed. 4. Apostacy finall, *Heb. 10. 26, 27.* These not known to us, wherefore we hope well of all, till the Lord discover.

*Use.*

VER. 3, 4, 5.

*And I hated Esau, and laid his Mountaines and his Heritage waste, for the Dragons of the Wilderness; Where-as Edom saith, we are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places: Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; And they shall call them the border of wickednesse, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.*

1. **G**ods Protestation. 2. The peoples Exception. 3. The Lords Confirmation of what he protesteth, by an argument from an effect, wherein he appeales to themselves, for witnesses: *De hoc supra;* Hatred of Esau manifested by a sign, their desolation; where the Antithesis is understood.

*Wilderness for Dragons, that is, without Inhabitant, as Isa. 34. 13.* Hence



Hence observe, That externall afflictions are unto Reprobates, testimonies of Gods hatred. Reason, Because no such are freed from the curse of the Law, *Gal. 3.19.* branches whereof even those outward afflictions are, *Deut. 28.* examples are extant; Not the least Sickness, Infamy, Penury, Famine, Banishment, Death, all stand unto such, in the nature of Curses, as the Law propounds them; A sign of which is, For that they all work together for evill unto such; whereas it is contrary in them who love God, *Rom. 8. 28.* They do but harden such, as *Pharaoh*; or cause blasphemy, as in many, bringing out into the eyes of men the hidden Corruption of the Heart. Object. If any shall say, They are made testimonies of love? *Heb. 12. 6.* *Ans.* So are they to Gods Children, not to Reprobates: To them, they are fatherly Chastisements: To these, severe Punishments; a sign whereof is, That they are driven, by them, the farther from God.

Hence then it will follow, That from Corrections we cannot conclude certainty of Election, or of the Love of God: No man can thus reason, The Lord follows me with crosses, therefore he hath chosen me to Salvation; For, To some men they are pledges, and testimonies of his wrath and hatred, and as one well terms them, *Atrium inferorum*: And therefore vain is that conclusion of many, from Corrections to Gods love: As, How often heare we it, from profane men; They doubt not, they say, but God loves them; Why? Because he follows them with Judgments; never without one cross or another, in Children, Goods, good Name, Body, Mind. In summe: These Externall things are ever to be measured, according to Persons; not Persons according to them. It is true, That Crosses to Gods Chosen, are tokens of his love; but crosses to a Castaway, are Pledges of his hatred; And though it be said, That whomsoever God loves, him he corrects; yet is it not convertible, That whomsoever God corrects, him he loves. *Saul* had his punishment, as well

Use.

as *David* his Troubles; *Ishmael* Famine, as well as *Isaac*, &c. Yet neither beloved God.

What then is to be done, in this case, for comfort? If thou wilt have comfort in a Cross, look to this; Art thou chosen? called, &c. Then Crosses are Comfortable; If no token of Election, suspect thy self.

I might apply this unto our selves, unto many amongst us, whom the Lord hath long followed with heavy judgments externall, robbing of Children, or heart-breaking with ungracious Children: Beloved, I say not, where these are, there the men are hated; but yet, where these things are amongst some, they are tokens of Gods Hatred.

What then to be done in outward Crosses? First, Look to their issue, and fruit, that they have in thee; As 1. If they humble thee for thy sins, *Jer. 5. 3.* 2. If they bring neerer unto God, *Hos. 5. 15.* 3. If they make thee feare before God, not only while they are felt, but after they are removed: *Pharaoh* cries *peccavi*, and promisseth amendment while the Rod is on him; *Esa* howls whilest he is under the hand of God; the wicked Jews, *Ezra 9.* crouch, whilest the hand of God presseth them; but when a little ease is given them, they break the Commandements; *ver. 10.*

*Observ.*

*Psal. 118. 18.*

God otherwise corrects his own Children, otherwise Castawayes; I meane, in respect of the measure, and weight of his Corrections: So *David*, *The Lord hath chastened, and corrected me, but he hath not given me over unto death*; *Israelites* carried Captives, as well as *Edomites*; but yet *Israel* returns; *Edom* is laid waste, *Isa. 27. 7, 8.* Not smitten, as he that smote her; For, 1. In measure. 2. In the branches. 3. To purge sin, *ver. 8. 9.* Not so with the wicked; See *2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.* His own, for a time, *Psa. 54. 7, 9.* His enemies for ever, *Mal. 1. 3.*

The Reasons may be these.

1. The Promise of God made, of love, to his people.

2. The

2. The difference of their sins: It is true, that Gods Children are sometimes overtaken with the same sins, that others are; But, though the same sins, yet not in like measure committed; One, with an high hand: The other, of frailty.

And this should comfort Gods Children against all common judgments, wherewith the Lord shall chasten, or visit us; As, what have we not cause to expect, in regard of our sins? Wicked men foolishly thus reason, to the deluding of their soules, *Isa.* 28. 15. though a plague run over all, yet it shall not come nigh them; for, they have made a Covenant with Death, &c. Gods Children may better thus reason, though they cannot assure themselves to be exempted from common Calamities, yet, from the measure of them; For with the Lord, they are at agreement.

Use.

Beloved, What plagues we, in this Land, have cause to feare; The Commonness, and height of sin, in our Multitude, and that communication with them, in a measure, by Gods Children, who seeth not? And it is good for us all, to prepare to meet the Lord by Repentance: But yet, this is our comfort; there shall be a difference betwixt the Righteous and Wicked; betwixt him, that serveth God, and him, that serveth him not. The means, whereby the Lord provides for the comforts of his own Servants, These: 1. He delivers them from the Temptation, as he did *Lot*, *Noah*, &c. 2. Or else provides a mean for restitution, *Ex.* 9. 3. Comforts inwardly, in afflictions. 4. Takes from evill to come, *2 Kings* 22. 30.

Edom saith, *We are impoverished, but we will return, and build the desolate places.* ] Mark here the nature of wicked men, opposing themselves to the power of God, and the course of his Judgments, & providence: We are impoverished, but we will return & build the desolate places; *Isa.* 9. 10. *Ephraim*, in the pride and presumption of their hearts, say, *The Bricks, indeed, are fallen down, but we will build*

Ver. 4.  
Observ.

*it again with hewen stones; the wild Fig-trees are cut down, but we will change them into Cedars. Pharaoh, though he sees, the more he oppresseth, the more the people grew, through Gods blessing; yet ceaseth not to attempt their destruction: And, when Israel flies, yet ceaseth not to pursue them, till he be destroyed with his People. Exod. 14. The Scribes, and Pharisees, though they see still the Disciples growing, and the number of Believers to be multiplied; yet, cease they not to persecute; So was it with Saul against David.*

Use.

And, at this day, How strive men with their Maker, the Potter with the Potter! though they see the hand of God against them, yet still are fighters against the Lord; See *Act. 5. 39. Gamaliel* yet could thus say, *If it be of God, ye cannot destroy it, except you will be found fighters against the Lord:* But, let Gods children learn to humble themselves for their sins, under the mighty hand of God: more prevalent to turn away Gods wrath, is unfeigned Repentance, than all the power and might of man: It is excellently said of *Job, Cha. 9. v. 4.* He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, who ever was seen against him, that hath prospered? And, how vain such contentions are, he sheweth by his might, in the mightiest Creatures: This therefore let us do, when as we shall see the Lord against us; humbly deprecate his judgments, but feare to stand out against him.

Observ.

*They shall build, but I will throw down.*] When God means to destroy, no man can withstand, or hinder desolation; The *Ephraimites* promised unto themselves Resting, the Lord had denyed the contrary, therefore they perish. An 130 years after the death of Christ, the Jews, by the leave, and help of *Julian* the Emperour, attempted to re-edifie their City and Temple; but mark, how the Lord, because his Counsels must stand, and because he will be known to be true in his threatnings, causeth fearefull thundrings, lightnings, and Earthquakes to arise, many

many of them slain, and all driven from their attempts: And other stories record many huge hosts of Jews, attempting the recovery of their Holy Land, and their dispersions: The like ye may see in the Lords dealing against Antichrist; many attempts have they made to destroy, with the name of *Luther*, and *Calvin*, the whole truth of God, and to re-establish their Kingdom of Idolatry; but yet see we him blatted by the breath of the Lords mouth; and though an utter consumption cannot be expected till the brightness of Christs coming, 2 *Thes.* 2. 8. Yet this they can never hope for, The recovery of their full power, and dominion they once had in the Christian world.

What doth this teach us, but to tremble before the Lord, when as we see his judgments begin to take course against us; and to take heed, how we harden our selves to his resistance, that is, to our own utter overthrow and desolation? It is the fashion of many, when they see the Lord crossing their attempts, or weakening their State justly, for their sins, yet still to attempt their fortification, without humbling themselves for their sins: But it is vain to strive, when the Lord will destroy; In these days of security, how many fond, and profane speeches have been heard; That they will not cease till they have brought Corne to such a rate, &c? Beloved, it were well to depend upon Gods blessing, if we had turned from our sins: But, thus desperately to oppose against the will, and decrees of the Lord, without humiliation, how vain is it?

*And they shall call them the border of Wickedness,* [It may be demanded, what was the cause of this irrecoverable desolation brought upon *Edom*? These speciall sins we may see set down, *Num.* 20. 18. *Ezek.* 25. 13. *Jer.* 49. & *alii*; but specially, if ye read the Prophecy of *Obadiah*, where this judgment of God is denounced against the *Edomites*, and the causes thereof specified.



One was unkindness to the people of God, denying them, in their passages, common courtesies, *Num. 20. 18.* Another was, Cruelty against his Brother *Jacob*, in that, not only they helped them not against their Adversaries, but were partakers with them in their cruelty : And thirdly, Insulting over them in their afflictions, *ver. 10.*

*Observ.*

Now then mark here, How fearefull a sin it is, and how the matter of extreme desolations, cruell usage of the people of God : The Lord delights in this Title, *The avenger of his people, Luk. 18. 7, 8.* and therefore, as *James* hath it, *Chap. 5. 6. Ye have condemned and killed the just, therefore howle.* Beloved, This is the common, and crying sin of this Land ; unkindness, and cruelty offered to the people of God, especially, to the Lords Prophets, and his Anointed, and for which we have just cause to feare an heavy judgment : And our own Congregation is not free ; How many lewd miscreants tollerated in the height of iniquity ? If any man make shew of Religion, he only denyed common courtesie, and happy he that is first in his Affliction ; and how triumph they in such a mans calamity ? Let such feare, They become not a By-word.

*Ver. 5. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.]* We have here the use of this judgment, amongst the people of God, namely, The celebrating, and praising of the great power, and might of the Lord, in the destruction of the Enemies of his people.

*Observ.*

Hence learn we, To have our eyes open upon the judgments of God ; That no judgment, whether generall, or personall, may pass our observation. The Reason is, because they serve excellently to make our hearts stand in awe of the Majesty of God, and to admonish us of our own danger, in case of like misdemeanour ; See *1 Cor. 10.*

*Use.*

And here the blindness, or negligence of our people, must be blamed ; Many are the judgments that we have seen



seen, and heard to be executed upon particular places. That fearefull inundation, those overthrows by thundring and lightning; the beggary of Drunkards; hardness of heart in Persecutors: Our eyes should be open, to take notice of this judgment; partly, for our own admonition; partly for the praise of Gods mercy, for exempting us. And lastly, To celebrate the praise of the power, and justice of God, in the desolation of his Adversaries.

Object. May we then rejoyce in the overthrow of Gods Enemies? *Ans.* Not simply, as their destruction, but as manifestations of his glory; See *Exod. 15. Judg. 5.*

## VER. 6, 7.

*A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master: If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Master, where is my feare? Saith the Lord of Hosts, unto you, O Priests, that despise my Name; ye offer polluted bread upon mine Altar, &c.*

**T**He second sin here taxed, is, The despising of Gods Name, that is, sleight regard of the worship of God: Where first, is proved, that greater regard is due unto the Lord, by a reason drawn from the double power of God, Fatherly, and of a Master: If a Father, I should be honoured; but a Father: The proposition is proved, for, A Son honoureth his Father. 2. The sin, and the parties, to whose charge it is laid, despising of Gods Name, to the Priests. 3. Their exception, and deniall. 4. The Lords reply, by an instance, *ver. 7.* uncleane Bread. 5. The doubling of the exception by the Priests. 6. A second reply of the Lord, likewise, by instance.

The first Note we have here, is this, That Civill, and Domesticall subjection is approved by God: The authority

*Observ. 1.*

riety of Masters, and Fathers, &c. this is apparent ; For Masters Authority, read *Gen. 16. 9. To Hagar, Go and humble thy self to thy Mistris ; Mat. 8. 9.* The speech of the Centurion approved by our Saviour ; a clear point ; *1 Cor. 7. 21. Eph. 6. 5. Col. 3. 22.* That ancient error, in the Apostles dayes, reprov'd ; and their Reason, from the quality of Masters ; If good, then equall : If evill, what dominion ? I answer, If good, the rather to be obeyed, *2 Tim. 6. 2.* And, though there be equality of right to Gods Kingdom, yet disparity of power, in respect of externall state : If evill, yet to be obeyed, *1 Pet. 2. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 1.* though not in evill ; the Reason, it hinders not faith, *1 Cor. 7. 21.* Contrary causeth blasphemy of Gods truth.

*Observ. 2.*

The next thing here observable, is, How God must be acknowledged, not only as a Father, but as a Master also ; and duties to him performed, mingledly, of feare and love : As a Father, we love ; as a Master, we must feare ; therefore, thus propounded, *1 Pet. 1. 17.* Father, which judgeth ; The Reason is, because, If without love, or respect thereto, it is slavish ; if without respect to Majesty, sleightly ; Best duties done, when both are mingled, *Rom. 11. 22.* both bounty, and severity ; one causeth chearefulness, the other, reverence.

*Use*

Now then Beloved, Learn we to acknowledge the Lord to be such unto us, that in all duties performed, those two vertues, Love and Feare may meet together : And what ever duty thou performest, consider God, not only as a Father, to wink at imperfections, but also as a Master, to correct severely, contempt : But these ye shall see disjoyned, in most mens practice : Some talk of Gods love, and mercy, and, he will spare as a Father ; but, will you see what this naked consideration of the Love of God, and his mercy, breeds ? either absolute neglect, or sleight performance of holy duties : Some apprehend God, as a severe, and strict Master ; and that meditation wrings from

from them some services, but slavishly performed, and therefore not acceptable unto God : He best doth duties, that mingleth both ; thus heare, beholding Gods love, that makes thee cheerefull ; considering his Majesty, that makes thee reverend ; Thus pray, thus live, 1 *Pet.* 1.17.

*That despise my Name.* ] How, if any aske ? They offered uncleane bread, that is, profaned the worship of God ; Bread put, Synechdochically, for any Sacrifice ; For the understanding whereof know, that there were certaine Beasts, by Gods ordinance, uncleane, some cleane ; The distinction we have, *Gen.* 6.7. some that God had sanctified, to be offered in sacrifice ; some otherwise : This their first sin, That they offered such things, as God had forbidden to be offered.

There cannot be a greater contempt offered to the Name of God, than to offer unto him things prohibited : The Gentiles, and Israelites, condemned for this, though full of Devotion ; they spared not their own Sons, & Daughters, from offering them in sacrifice : In 1 *Sam.* 15. Saul had reserved the *Amalekites* Cattell, yea, the fat of them, for sacrifice, yet, is deprived of his Kingdom, because the Lord had cursed them with a Curse,

*Observ.*

And therefore, Let this teach us to take heed how we, in the substance of Gods worship, offer him any thing, that he hath either forbidden, or not enjoined. Will-worship, it is the common sin of our People ; Fasting in Lent, the highest point of Devotion ; outward gestures, a great part of their Religion ; their eye should be to what the Lord enjoineth, and labour for a right understanding of the manner, and ends of enjoyning.

*Use.*

*And ye say, wherein have we despised thy Name ?* ]

Note here the nature of an Hypocrite, ready to justify himself, when the Lord himself reproves, and layeth sin to his charge : gladly would they seem righteous, in the sight of God ; and put off from them the Accusations laid to their charge : Our Saviour layeth this sin to the

*Observ.*

charge of Pharisees, *Luk. 16. 15. Ye are they that justify your selves before men*: This was *Eves* fault, *Gen. 3.* shifting her fault off to the Serpent, *Adam*, to the woman; *Saul, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, 1 Sam. 15.* The Reasons are, 1. A desire, through hypocrisie, to seeme righteous; no man so vile, but would gladly avoid the censure of Atheisme, and profanenes. 2. That they forget the Lord to be a searcher of secrets, and trier of the hearts, and reines. 3. That opinion of righteousness, and Religion, they have obtained among men; See *Luk. 16. 15.* This sin, through their gross ignorance, rise among our People.

Use.

And, Let it teach Gods Children better things: The just man is the Accuser of himself, and free confession of sins, his mark.

Observ.

Ver. 7. *Ye offer polluted Bread.* ] The Lord instanceth in particulars: So then, Particularizing is the best mean, to bring men to the acknowledgment of their sins; So the Lord here: So *Samuel, 1 Sam. 12. 19.* in asking a King: So *Peter, Act. 2. 23.* The murder of our Lord; So *Stephen, Act. 7. 51.* Their resisting of the Holy Ghost, speaking in the Prophets: *Iohn Baptist to Herod, Mat. 14. 4.* *Paul before Felix,* of Temperance, *Acts 24. 25.* The Reason is, because it is naturall to every man, to wind out of generall Accusations; and when reproofes are ministered in gross, they do little good; such shifting there is from generalities.

Use.

Then see we here a Ministers warrant for particularizing the sins of his own people; A course generally distasteth, though most wholesome, and the best means to make the Word work to humiliation. 2. We are taught, (but so, as we guid our words with discretion) to whom the Ministry is committed, to labour hereto, for the good of our People. 3. You that are the people; To be content, to have your particular sins, the sores of your soules, ript up, and laid open. 4. To apply generalis to particulars; and

and so shall ye best profit, in hearing.

A second sin laid to the charge of the Priests, and people, is sleight performance of the Worship of God: So they sacrifice, no matter how.

So then, note this as an heavy sin, For a man sleightly to performe the Worship of God, without regard to the Majesty of God, or the holiness of his Worship; yea, though the things done be commanded; for example, To pray, is a thing commanded; but, to pray sleightly, or unreverently, a thing abominable: The Lord professeth, *Iſa. 1. 12.* that he had not required what they performed, that is, held them in as little esteeme, as if he had not commanded them, in regard of their bad manner of performance: The Reason is, because the Lord looks not so much to the outward work, as to the inward Affection of the heart; measures Religion by sincere Affection, not by multitude, or works done, in the service of God.

*Observ.*

Here then, see what our people may judge of all their services, that unreverently they performe: This very sin is rise amongst our people, whose whole worship consisteth in outward obedience; pray they must, how they pray; not to be regarded; Hence, they think a duty, receiving of the Sacraments, &c. But know, Beloved, That un reverence more displeaseth, than outward observance can please: Wherefore, Let us all be admonished, when we come before God, to sharpen our affections, and intentions to the utmost, that the Lord may have pleasure in our sacrifices.

*Use*

For this cause, weigh, 1. It is Gods work; and remember, who hath said, *Ier. 48. 10. Cursed is he that doth the Lords work negligently.* 2. To whom; to God himself, a great King, *Mal. 1. ult.* 3. Before whom; before God, and Angels, *Act. 10. 33.*

Hence, learne we to humble our selves, not only for the omission of duties; but, for the imperfect manner of our services: Thou halt not all done, in Repentance, when



thou hast bewailed thy gross sins, and wilfull omissions ; but, in every good duty, thou hast cause of humbling, in respect of the coldness of performance ; as hearing coldly, praying coldly.

## VER. 8.

*And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evill ? and if ye offer the Lame, and Sick, is it not evill ? offer it now unto thy Governour: Will he be pleased with, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of Hosts?*

*Observ.*

**N**OTE here the fashion of a wicked Hypocrite, To keep the best to themselves, and serve God with that, that is most despicable ; See *Gen. 4. 3.* Cain brings an offering, but as if he cared not what, of the fruits of the ground ; *Abel*, of the first fruits, and of the fat of the Flock. 1. The first fruits. 2. The fat. 3. The first born. 4. The first day of the week.

*Use.*

And generall is this sin, at this day : See the strength of youth given to vanity ; when old, then they will bethink themselves of serving God ; Health to the Devill, sickness to serve God ; when no other business, then heare a Sermon ; understanding, and wit in the prime, bent to other studies ; Religion the last, when understanding is gone ; Therefore, mark how Gods judgment is upon such, their services utterly rejected, and themselves given over to perish in their sins ; seldome, or never, see you any such become religious, being forsaken of God : And let it be an admonition, to take heed, how we thus serve God with the refuse : A Child of God thinks nothing too deare, an Hypocrite, any thing good enough.

*Observ. 2.*

Apply these types to the truth, they had a double signification : they figured Christ, that Lamb undefiled, and without spot ; but withall, figured some things to be regarded of us, in our services : As 1. The blind sacrifice was



a type of ignorant services; which are ever held abominable; therefore S. Paul every where calls for knowledge to be ground of all service; pray with understanding, 1 Cor. 14. 15. Sing with understanding; and Rom. 12. 1. services reasonable called for: Whence it is evident, that all blind devotion of ignorant people, are abominable sacrifices; See Rom. 10. 2. their excuse is, God knows their mind; but he looks, thou shouldst also know, &c.

*Lamenefs.* ] Is hypocrisie, double-mindedness, Jam. 1. 8. and 1 King. 18. 21. Halting betwixt two, when no consent betwixt the Affection, and Action: God did not allow sowing of the field with seeds divers; nor Lintie-woollie, in garments; nor yoking together of an Oxe, and an Asse: wherefore, damnable is all doubling, in hypocrites; See Isa. 29. 13. *They honour me With their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

*Sick.* ] Or faint, or languishing services; that come from us faintly, without cherrefulness: the Lord would have the very strength of our Affections, and Intentions, the whole strength in his services given unto him: those are faint, and languishing, that come coldly from us.

Another added, *Unblemished.* ] Whereby, absolute innocency signified in all those, that worship him; and not the least mixture of humane devices in Gods service; So that the very Prayers of a wicked man are all abominable.

Last of all, observe the Amplification of their sin, what they would not dare to do to men, that they presume to do unto God: And see, whether this be not right the disposition of our People: If the King, yea, or a meane man should speak unto us, would we gaze, or sleepe, or interrupt him? A Present to our Land-lord we carry with all submission; To God we come, hand over head. To our Friends Table we pass not humanity, and before our Brethren, we carry our selves reverently; Coming to the Lords Table not regarded.

*Observ. 3.*

## VER. 9.

*And now, I pray you, beseech God, that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: Will he regard your persons, saith the Lord of Hosts?*

**A** Denunciation of Gods judgment against both Priests, and People, in respect of their profaning of the worship of God: The judgments denounced are these: 1. The rejection of their Prayers, and Sacrifices. 2. The translating of his worship, from them to the Gentiles.

The passage unto this Denunciation, by *prolepsis*. on this manner: It is true, that in these things we have been faulty, but we will pray before God, that he may have mercy upon us. Sub: By an ironical permission, or injunction; well, saith the Prophet, do so, I pray you; pray before God for mercy; And he gives a Reason; *E manu vestra est hoc*; as if he had said, you indeed, had need to pray, for, by your means. (that are the Priests,) all this profanation of the worship of God, hath been committed amongst the people: Had you better instructed them, and rejected their lame Sacrifices, profaneness could never have grown to such a head.

2. A correction. *Will the Lord accept?* (The interrogation implies the stronger Negation) that is, He will not accept your Persons, that is, approve you, or your Prayers.

*Observ.*

A heavy judgment of God it is, to have our Prayers rejected from acceptance; therefore this set down, here, as one heavy punishment; See also, *Isa. 1. 15*.

The Reasons. 1. Our own indigency of all good that may comfort. 2. Exposed to all dangers, bodily, spiritual. 3. Prayer made the only mean, to obtaine good things, *Mat. 7. 7*. To remove evils, *Jam. 5. 13*. Common judgments, *2 Chron. 7. 14*.

Take

Use.

Take we heed of this judgment : In what state soever it pleaseth God to place me, at home, or abroad, in liberty, or bonds, in plenty, or want, sickness, or health ; methinks, yet, so long as free entrance stands open to the throne of grace, and the Lord is ready to heare, when I cry for help, there is comfort . And, be my state never so prosperous in outward things, while God turns the deafe eare towards me, and is as one that heareth not, I am miserable.

And as of the Judgment, so, of the causes : Many I might reckon up, as, 1. Ignorance of the Mediatour. 2. Asking things unlawfull; or, to ends unlawfull, *Jam. 4. 3.* More specially, impenitent living in any sin, *Joh. 9. 31.* God heareth not sinners : and *Psal. 66. 18.* *If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not heare me ;* Mark the phrase, *If I (regard) wickedness in my heart ;* if my affections, and purposes, be to abominations : And, let them all lay it to heart , whose hearts, and affections are entangled, in the sins of the world : Our people, they are generally thus minded ; They may whore, and sweare, and drink, and be drunken, &c. all the week ; and a little Sundaies Lip-labour in Prayer must serve to propitiate for all their week-daies abominations : But, know, God hears no Whoremonger, &c, ordinarily such.

Particularly, Let me touch some speciall sins : Amongst the rest, these are eminent.

1. Contempt of the publique Ministry ; See for this, *Pro. 28. 9.* and *Pro. 1.* Now then, consider what we are to think of all that Lip-labour of recusant Papists, they pray by number, and think, for that, they shall be heard : Recusancy in our people, in forsaking the Assemblies ; either, of desperate profaneness, or, as thinking private devotions are better services ; they can serve God at home ; just like, as if some Justice of peace, when he is called to some speciall service for the King, at the generall Assize, or Sessions, should answer, He would serve the King at home ;

home; And, how many present in the Congregation, whose hearts tremble not at the Word?

A second particular sin, in this kind, is, *Pro. 21. 13.* Lack of commiseration of our Brethrens necessities; though men, so disposed, make long prayers, yet the Lord will not heare.

A third, that here mentioned, Careless performance of the worship of God; this makes all services abominable: Amongst other Sacrifices acceptable to God, there was one especially pleasing, namely, The ( whole ) burnt offering; Figuring, perhaps, that fervent affection that should shew it self in every service, performed by us to our God; See *Rom. 12. 11.* other temper better fits in any thing, than in the service of God.

Again, Is it such a judgment, not to be accepted in praying? A heavy judgment therefore, to be void of the spirit of Prayer, and Deprecation; as *Zech. 12. 10.* And, this the state of our people, that cannot pray.

*This hath been by your means.*] That is, the offering of blind, lame, &c. And so you shall see, in sundry Scriptures, sins of People imputed to defects of Teachers.

If any demand, why? For default of better instruction, and neglect of duty that way; or, 2. In regard of lewd life, causing the people to abhor the offering, 1 *Sam. 2. 17.* and drawing them by example. Or, 3. By admitting the lame sacrifices, without reproofe, or rejection.

*Observ.* •

But, thus we see, That the sins of the people are imputed to the Minister, if he, at any time, be defective in duty; *ex. gr.* their ignorance laid on the Ministers, when they faile in instruction; their profanations imputed to them, when they faile, in admonition; *Ez. k. 3. 16, 17, &c.*

The Reason whercof, is this Principle; What sin thou hinderest nor, within bounds of calling, that sin is thine, by participation, and thine, as if thou hadst committed it; the Reason, because there lay on thee a bond of duty, to hinder it; as *Neb. 13. 17.* *What evil thing is this that*

(ye)

(ye) do, in breaking the Lords Sabbath? [ye] do, because ye hinder not, by authority, and power of the sword.

And this should teach us, to take heed, 1 Tim. 5. 22. that we partake not in other mens sins; and as by no other means, so neither by this, admitting the lame and blind, for sacrifices: To apply it particularly: This sin may we incur, by admitting a blind Idiot to the Lords Table; whose Sacrifice, how can it but be blind, when as, alas! He knows not what he doth, neither is able to discern the Lords Body: Surely, if the Lord impute to the Levites the profaneness of the people, because they admitted their Sacrifices, without difference; how Ministers can be free from profaning the Lords Ordinance, that admit the blind and lame to the Lords Table, I see not.

And this, methinks, should stay the fury and malice of unreasonable, and evill men, against Ministers, in this behalf; that they are carefull not to admit, hand over head, every man that offers himself to the Lords Table: Now, Lord be mercifull to my personall sins! I know, if he should enter into judgment for the sins of mine own Person, I am not able to abide it; but, if the Lord will also impute to us the neglects of our people; can any blame, if we desire to keep off that burthen?

And, let no man say, The Minister is excused, and the sin is only the Parties, that adventureth; This plea, if it could have holden, might have been made by the Priests of the Jews: They offered such as the people brought; had they brought better, better they would have offered; yet this made their sin, because the Lord had forbidden the offering of such, upon what pretence soever brought unto them.



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The Reason whereof, is this Principle; What sin thou hinderest not, within bounds of calling, that sin is thine, by participation, and thine, as if thou hadst committed it; the Reason, because there lay on thee a bond of duty, to hinder it; as *Neh. 13. 17.* *What evil thing is this that*  
(ye)



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And this should teach us, to take heed, 1 Tim. 5. 22. that we partake not in other mens sins; and as by no other means, so neither by this, admitting the lame and blind, for sacrifices: To apply it particularly: This sin may we incur, by admitting a blind Idiot to the Lords Table; whose Sacrifice, how can it but be blind, when as, alas! He knows not what he doth, neither is able to discern the Lords Body: Surely, if the Lord impute to the Levites the profaneness of the people, because they admitted their Sacrifices, without difference; how Ministers can be free from profaning the Lords Ordinance, that admit the blind and lame to the Lords Table, I see not.

Use

And this, methinks, should stay the fury and malice of unreasonable, and evill men, against Ministers, in this behalf; that they are carefull not to admit, hand over head, every man that offers himself to the Lords Table: Now, Lord be mercifull to my personall sins! I know, if he should enter into judgment for the sins of mine own Person, I am not able to abide it; but, if the Lord will also impute to us the neglects of our people; can any blame, if we desire to keep off that burthen?

And, let no man say, The Minister is excused, and the sin is only the Parties, that adventureth; This plea, if it could have holden, might have been made by the Priests of the Jews: They offered such as the people brought; had they brought better, better they would have offered; yet this made their sin, because the Lord had forbidden the offering of such, upon what pretence soever brought unto them.

VER. 10. *Who is there even among you, that would shut the doores for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine Altar, for nought: I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*

**R** eading, in our English, corrupt: Better thus, after Tremellius; who is there amongst you, that shuts the doore, on free-cost? or, do you kindle the fire, on free-cost? The Interrogation, as above, denies more strongly. For the meaning, we are to know. That the Priests, and Levites, serving in the Sanctuary, had their severall offices, and places, to serve in, Num. 3. & 4. 1 Chro. 25. & 26. some, to bear the Arke; some, to keep the Lamp; some, to make clean the Sanctuary, and Instruments thereof; some, to dress the Sacrifices; some, as Porters, to keep the doores of the Temple, &c. And, to all these was appointed a portion of Tythes, and Oblations, for recompence of their service: The meanest door-keeper was to live of the Sanctuary, and to have his portion, for attendance: The meaning, then, is this: There is not the meanest of you, that hath served me, in the meanest place, but I have provided him of maintenance, as for recompence.

These words, then, contain an Amplification of those Priests, and Levites sins: That whereas the Lord had so liberally rewarded even the meanest of them, for their service, they had no more care to honour him, and to preserve his worship from profane contempt.

*Observ.*

Hence then may be observed; That there is not the meanest service performed unto God, but hath his reward: This not only, in Ministry, but, in common life; See Eph. 6. 8. Col. 3. 24. touching the offices of Servants to their Masters.

*Use*

It confutes the speech of profane men, Mal. 3. 14.

*Job*



in duties of obedience : This shall be our just condemnation, that the Lord having provoked us so by his blessings, we have failed in the duties of thankfulness : Wherefore, Let us all remember to make use of the mercies, and loving kindneses of our God; that they may be to us so many allurements, to sincerity, and soundness, in our service.

Observ.

*I will not accept an offering at your hand* ] What is the Reason? Namely, because they had offered unlawfully.

Hence then observe; That, when once a man hath corrupted himself, in the worship of God, his lawfull services, during impenitency, have no acceptance with the Lord: The Reason is, Because the Sacrifices of wicked men are abominable, and such mens persons are not reconciled unto God, *Pro. 21. 27.*

Use.

And this may teach us what to judg of that *opus operatum*, taught by Papists; when as, they teach, that good works, by whomsoever performed, are accepted of the Lord; as, justice, in an Atheist, is a good, and acceptable work to him, *See, Schottus Heb. 11. 6.* Without Faith, impossible to please God; Sacrifice of wicked abominable; for, such men want the foundation of all acceptance, namely, Reconciliation with God, *Heb. 9. 14.* Nor can they performe services, in acceptable manner; As, 1. Not as from the right fountain, *Lev. 10.* Nor, 2. As to the right end, Gods glory.

Take we heed, therefore, How we corrupt our selves, in the Worship of God; Labour especially, to be at one with God, in Christ; *See Heb. 11. 4. Gen. 4. 4.* and, repeat especially of Corruptions, in the first Table.

VER. 11.

## VER. II.

For, from the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; & in every place, incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure offering for my Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.

**T**He second judgment here threatned, is, The translating of the Kingdom of God, and his worship, from the Jews, to the Gentiles.

A fearfull judgment, to have the word of God, and his worship, taken from us; See *Mat. 21. 12. Isa. 5.* The Reason; men thus deprived, sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; *Mat. 4. 16.* are as without God in the world, *Eph. 2. 12.* they become more vile, as Jews, and Romanes; yea, from such, as the Arke from Israel, is the glory departed, *1 Sam. 4. 21.*

**T**ake we heed of this judgment, and tremble at those things, that may procure it; As, 1. Corrupting our selves in this worship of God, 2. Receiving it in vain. 3. Cruell usage of the Ministers, *Mat. 23. 37.* Surely, though I be half of his mind, that taught; that when Antichrist's Kingdom hath been ruinated, it shall never again be re-established in full power; But, first, particular Congregations may, though not in full power, yet in some power; and, let us all fear before God.

For the meaning of the words: Papists have thus abused the Text, to the stablishing of their Idoll of the Mass: And, *Bellarmin.* when he comes to handle this place, calls it; *Insigne testimonium pro sacrificio Missæ.*

For orderly proceeding; First, see what they call the Mass: Namely, A Sacrifice of the New Testament, wherein Christs Body, and Bloud, is, in unbloudy manner, offered to God the Father, for propitiation for quick, and dead.

Observe.

What the Popish Mass is.



For this Sacrifice they thus reason, out of this place, viz. This Sacrifice must either be the sacrifice, whereby Christ offered himself, on the Cross; or, the sacrifice of the Jews; or spirituall sacrifices of Christians; or else, the sacrifice of the Mass.

Not the Sacrifice of Christ; for, that was offered, in one place, without the Gates of *Hierusalem*, *Heb. 13. 12.* Nor Jewish Sacrifices: For, this is opposed to Jewish Sacrifices; and they were to be abolished, and determined in Christ: Nor, the sacrifices of Christians: It remains, therefore, that it is the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Now, that we assume, is, That it is to be understood of the spirituall sacrifice of Christians, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* But, that this cannot be here meant, they thus reason: First, The sacrifice here spoken of, is called absolutely, *Mincha*, A Sacrifice, or Incense; but, when the Scripture speaks of spirituall Sacrifices, it useth a Terme diminutive, signifying the Analogicall, and impropet use of the word. I answer, Not so alwaies; for, *Rev. 8. 8.* Prayers called Incense absolutely, without a Terme abridging; and *Psal. 51. 17.* The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.

A second Argument; Because this sacrifice was to succeed the sacrifices of the Jews, and was never before offered; But, Prayers were offered before *2. Aug. 2.* That ground is false; For, the Prophet speaks only of a Sacrifice, that, in other manner, should be offered; whereas,  
1. The Jews offered them with other Ceremoniall rights; Christians should offer them without those rights.  
2. Whereas, those Jews offered, in Hypocrisis; Christians should offer them, in righteousness, *1. Mal. 2. 1.*

A third Argument; The Prophet speaks of a Sacrifice to be offered, by (Priests) of the new Testament; But Prayers are offered also, by (People.) I answer, Not so; but a Sacrifice to be offered by all the people, in the Christian Church; who are all made Priests unto God, *1. Pet. 2. 5.* *Rev. 1. 6.* And whereas they object, That the Lord promi-



promiseth to purge the Sons of *Levi*. Answer, Though the high Priest figured Christ; yet, the common Ranke figured all Christians.

A fourth Argument; One sacrifice; but, Spirituall sacrifices many. Answer, *Nomen speciei pro individuis*; as man, for all men.

A fifth; A (pure) offering; but so are not spiritual Sacrifices of Christians, according to Protestants. Answer, Though impure in themselves; yet pure, 1. by acceptance; because accepted as pure, for Christs sake, *1 Pet. 2. 5*. In respect, that God covers iniquity in his Children; *Nym. 23. 21*. *He seeth none iniquity in Jacob*; there (is) abundance; but he (seeth) none, that is, taketh notice of none, 2. Pure, in comparison of hypocriticall Jews, as, *Hab. 1. 13*. Some are said to be righteous, in comparison; The wicked devoureth him, that is righteous, in respect of himself. So, these Sacrifices in Christians, pure; not simply; but, in respect of those, that hypocrites offered amongst the Jews, 3. Pure, in respect of sincerity, and single-heartedness; pure, from hypocrisie: such Evangelicall purity is; every where, spoken of, as, *Mat. 5. 8*. *1 Tim. 5. 22*. And thus, we see their cavills answered.

Now, as touching their sacrifice of the Mass: These things our Divines have disputed. 1. Against the matter. 2. The Instrument. 3. The effect of it. 1. That it is a sacrificing of Christ, is needless, *Heb. 10. 14*. Christ having perfected forever them that be sanctified, by his one Oblation of himself. 2. Remission of sins perfectly obtained by Christ; and where remission of sin is, there needs no more Oblation for sins, *Heb. 10. 12, 14*. 2. Against the Priesthood; no orders of Priesthood, but Leviticall; and, after *Melchizedech*, Leviticall abolished; *Melchizedech* among *Cano*, *Heb. 7. 24*. 4. Against Propitiation; For, first, No shedding of blood; And, secondly, Christ, the only Propitiatory. 5. Against the manner; *modo incremento*, in an unbloody manner.

Answer,

Answer, 1. Absurd, that blood should be offered, in unbloody manner. 2. How propitiatory, if without shedding of blood? *Heb. 9. 22, 28.* Object. Called sacrifice, by Fathers. I answer, By representation, as Christ was said to be crucified before the eyes of the *Galatians, Gal. 3. 1.* So *Lombard*: Or, 2. *Propter adjunctam gratiarum actionem, eleemosynas, preces, corporis Oblationem.*

See we then, what is here meant: Namely, The spiritual sacrifices of praise, prayers, obedience of Christians; called Incense, by Analogy; the Type for the thing thereby shadowed; as also, for that it is usuall with the Prophets, to describe Christian worship, by the tenour of Jewish Religion.

This then, the drift, and meaning of the Prophet; that, whereas the Jews, like hypocrites, had profaned and polluted the worship of God; It should come to pass, that the Gentiles should offer pure sacrifices, that is, in pure manner, worship and serve God, not as hypocrites.

This worship of the Gentiles is set out; 1. By the place, where. 2. By the manner, how. 3. By the persons, whom. 4. By the ground, apprehension of the Majesty of God.

*Observ.*

First thing, here, observable, is, The difference of the New Testament, from the Old, in respect of the worship of God: And, it is thus; 1. Amplitude; because, whereas, before, Jews only worshiped; Now all Nations do him service. 2. Whereas Jewish worship was tyed to Places, we may, now, in every place, lift up pure hands; See *1 Tim. 2. 8.*

*Use.*

And this helps us, first, to understand many places of Scripture, that seem to import an universality of Gods grace, in respect of every particular person in the world; as, that is taught by Papists; That to every particular man is given sufficient grace to be saved, if he will; For, Christ dyed for all, &c. But, these general speeches are to be interpreted, with reference to the state of the Church of God, before Christ, amongst the Jews; that whereas, before,

before, Jews only were his people; Now, in respect of right, all Nations are admitted; *Eph. 2. 17, 18.*

Again, Mark here a benefit singular in the New Testament; that the Lord hath not tyed us to the Temple, only, in his worship; but, in every place, in the Field, in the Bed, in the Family: *Joh. 4. 21.*

By Gentiles, the Persons; See their state, *Eph. 2. 12.* Now called to be worshippers of God; See also, *Rom. 15. Mat. 28. 19. Go teach all Nations.* And, let not us forget to praise God for his mercy; we, who were even heathenish, yet now admitted to be of the household of faith.

The quality, *Pure.* ] The services of Gods Children, done in faith, and obedience, are pure in the eyes of God, by acceptation; See *1 Tim. 2. 8.* Lift up pure hands: I say, done in faith, for, otherwise, all unclean to the unclean, *Tit. 1. 15.* and, secondly, in obedience, when things are done, that God commands: I add, last of all, by acceptation; to exclude that Doctrine of Papists, touching perfect inherent Purity: Now, that they are not perfectly pure, by inherence of inherence of purity, appears. 1. Because sanctification imperfect, *Rom. 7. 20.* 2. Because Gods Children pray, to be judged in mercy; So *David, Psal. 143. 2.* 3. Cannot justify. Object. But it proceedeth from the Spirit of God, and grace of Christ. I answer, Yet through imperfect instruments, which defile them; The perfectest Scrivener marris his proportions, by an ill Pen; The perfectest soul, though it move perfectly, yet cannot make a lame man, to walk upright; The cunningest Musitian makes not an untuned Instrument sound perfectly; The purest water is defiled in a muddy Channel: How then pure? By acceptation, as above, *1 Pet. 2. 5.*

And this should comfort Gods children, in all their weak services, thou they cannot do them, without many imperfections. 1. If thy person be united unto Christ; thou

*Observe.*

*Observe.*

*Use.*

*Observe.*

art judged (as in Christ) not, as in thy self, 2. If apprehension of Christ, in every service. 3. If there be striving against impurity. 4. If bewailing of imperfections.

Lastly, the ground of pure worship; apprehension of the greatness, and Majesty of God: Ever according to apprehension of greatness, so is veneration performed.

Labour then to know the greatness of that God, whom thou servest; and that, by experience; otherwise, thou canst never with that humility, and reverence, perform his services, *Heb. 12. 27, 28.* Consider, then, the Power, the Justice, the endless Mercy of that God, to whom thou performest thy due worship, and service.

## VER. 12.

*But, ye have profaned it, in that ye say; The Table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even the meat is contemptible, &c.*

**I**N the eleventh verse, A judgment denounced against the Jews; *viz.* the taking from them his Word, and Worship, and giving it to the Gentiles: Here, a Reason given of that judgment; That *they had polluted the Name of the Lord*; proved by particulars, three in number, *ver. 12, 13.* And, *ver. 14.* A Curse threatened.

The parts two: 1. A Crime imputed. 2. A Curse denounced. The Crime, polluting the Name of God; amplified, by specifying particulars. 1. The Table of the Lord is polluted. 2. His meat contemptible. 3. That under the shew of devout service, they served him with the basest. Curse, *ver. 14.* with other reasons; All comprised in the description of these Hypocrites: 1. By their Title, Deceivers. 2. By their fair promises. 3. Slender performances.

Table, for Altar; Altar, for sacrifice, and service; *perovpuzis*; is polluted, that is, as a common profane work, in performance

formance whereof speciall reverence is not requisite : *Polluted my Name, Ezek. 36.* Not, that any reall blemish can come to the Majesty of God ; but for that their Facts were such, as, in their nature, tended that way : So that the sence is ; My Name, and Majesty, which you should tremble at, and reverence, you have ( as much as in you hath layen ) blemished, and dishonoured, by your unreverend, and unrespective behaviour in my worship, and by esteeming so lightly those things, that I have ordained for your maintenance.

It is an high point of dishonouring the name of God, either, basely to judg of, or, perfunctorily to perform the worship of God. The Apostle, *1 Cor. 11. 29.* speaking of one part of the worship of God, celebrating the Lords Supper ; thus notes the sin of such as come, without due preparation, to that Sacrament ; Their sin is, that *they discerned not the Body of the Lord* ; that is, whereas the Bread, and Wine, at the Lords Supper, were separated from common use, and set apart to represent the Body and Blood of Christ, and so ought, with all reverence, to be received ; They came to that holy Banquet, as to a common drinking ; *they discerned not the Lords Body*, that is, put no difference betwixt those holy Elements, and other ordinary repast, but came thereto, as to an ordinary banquet : See the hainousness of the sin, in comparison, and, in the punishment : *Ezek. 33. 31.* The Lord speaking of the sin of that people, in hearing the Word of God, notes their vile, and unreverend practice ; that they came, indeed, to heare, but how ? As if they had been to hear a Caroll, or idle Song ; so far were they from trembling at his Word.

And, mark, whether it argue not a base conceit of the Majesty of God, thus slubberingly to do his worship ? Take the Comparison, that the Prophet makes, *Offer is, now, as a stony Prince.*

See we, then, whether this high profaning of Gods Name

*Observ.*

*Use 1.*



Name be not rife in our people : And, Beloved, confider it well ; ye fhall fee it generall : It is a great part of the worfhip of God, to hear, as we ought, the word of God read, and preached unto us, by his Minifters ; yet fee, whether that the Lord complains of, by *Ezekiel, chap. 33.* be not the generall fin of the people ; that Preaching feems to them, Prating ; and the learnedft Sermons, of no better efteem, than old wives Fables : The celebrating of the Sacraments an high part of Gods worfhip ; yet fee, how thofe, in whom fuperftitious reverence is abolifhed, profane contempt is evident, not only by unreverent leaving them, but by unreverend handling them : we juftly condemn Popifh Adoration, but, it is too too evident, that they fcarcely finned more, In Idolatrous adoration, then we, in carelefs handling thefe holy myfteries ; *In medio virtus* : Adoration of the hoaft we muft all deteft, as abominable Idolatry ; but, profane irreverence fhould be as much fled from. Prayer, a principall part of the worfhip of God ; yet, how fleghtly performed, that wandering of the eye, and idle gazing, in the midft of devotions, argues unreverence, &c. Yea, let me afke the hearts of Gods own Children, whether we have not all caufe, in this point, to condemn our felves, and pray with *Naa-man* ; The good Lord be mercifull unto us in this. How leap many from their ordinary Callings, into the Temple ? and rufh *illis manibus, ad sacra.*

Ufe 2.

Let me, therefore ; in the fecond place, exhort as *Paul, Heb. 12. 28.* Let us have grace to ferve God, that we may pleafe him ; How is that ? with reverence, and fear. Mark Reafons ; we cannot otherwife pleafe God ; It is not babling in prayer, but reverence in prayer, that God accepts ; not hearing, but trembling at his word, *Ifa. 66. 2.* Not receiving, but difcerning the body of the Lord. 2. Our God is a confuming fire, that is, though gracious unto his Children, yet incensed even by them, his wrath burns, though not to their (utter) deftruction, yet to their heavy aftonifh.



astonishment. 3. *Eccles.* 5. 1, 2. Gods Majesty, our baseness. 4. Amongst heathen, a Principle; *Ut ne quis ad sacra, illotis manibus.* They had their purgings, and purifyings, before they came to worship their Idols; and they shall stand up in judgment to condemn us, that shewed more reverence to Idols, than we to the living God. 5. A note of a Child of God, reverently, and with fear to worship him, *1 Thes.* 2. 13. this that makes the word effectually, when a man considers, (whose) word he hears.

Again, hence may we take some light, for our better direction, in opening the Third Commandment; the summe whereof is this, that we pollute not, nor disreverence the Name God; This the Pharisees limited unto false swearing, *Mat.* 5. Some of our people. to vain swearing by the Name of God, not to swearing, in general: Now know, that the Name of God is polluted, not only, when thou swearest falsely; but, when thou hearest unreverently; when thou prayest unreverently: In a word, as here *Malachy* hath expressed two particulars: 1. By careless performing, or base opinion of the worship of God. 2. By light esteeming the works of his mercy, and providence over us, in provision for our maintenance. If thou pray unreverently, thou hast polluted Gods Name; If thou think, or speak unreverently of the works of his providence, &c. thou hast polluted his Name.

*And the fruit thereof, even his meat is contemptible.* ] Here is a finding fault with the providence of God, in our maintenance; See the Text; his *Proventus*, that is, those issues that come by Gods ordinance, unto the Priests, for their sustenance, They counted it a base allowance, and contemptible meat: For the better understanding of the words, we must know, that of the sacrifices dedicated unto God, there was a Portion due unto the Priests; as, *1 Sam.* 2. *Hos.* 4. especially, in the sin-offerings, where

Use 3.

with they were maintained : Now, this is noted as their fault, that the Lord having thus liberally provided for them, they counted the allowance base, and not good enough for them ; this their fault : The same see in the Israelites, when God had fed them, a long time, with Manna, meat meet for Angels, if they should eat ; mark, how they murmur ; nothing but Manna, they must have flesh, and that of the daintiest : The same Fault-finding with the Lords Portion, and allotment, is rise in our people : The poor, he grudgeth at his hard fare, though he may live in it ; seele the Lords good providence, in giving it strength to nourish, and preserve in health, beauty, and strength of body. The Labourer, he grudgeth at the Gentleman, that he lives at such ease ; though, as *Solomon* speaks, his sleep be a thousand times more sweet, and quiet unto him. And, in a word, go over all states, and you shall find this murmuring against the providence of God, in the means allotted by him, for their maintenance.

Causes hereof two: 1. An over-weening conceit we have of our own worth, and deserving ; we seem to our selves to have deserved better things at Gods hands, when-as, alas ! not the least morsell of the coarsest bread is deserved by us. 2. Lack of perswasion of Gods love, in our designment to our particular states : A man, perswaded of Gods fatherly love, thus easily resolves, what state God placeth him in, that is best for him ; knowing, that if another were better for him, God, being a father, would not deny it him, *Mat. 7. 9, 10.*

Well, Let us hence learn to profit our selves in the understanding of the Law of God ; surely, it is the end, why the Law entred, that sin, that is, the knowledge of sin might abound ; And, that man, that knows the infiniteness of his own misery by the Law, is best fitted to comprehend, what is the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of the Love of God, in Christ, revealed in the Gospel. Learn we, therefore, by this, and the like Scriptures,

to make the full meaning of the Law familiar unto us.

It is one main cause of that sottish pride, and presumptuous opinion men carry of themselves, as that they know not what the Law means. The First Commandment forbids worshipping other Gods; free from this; free from all breach of the Law; whereas, if we were acquainted with the meaning of the Law, we should find a thousand transgressions of every Precept, besides the gross sin, in the particular specified; See *Mat. 5.*

## VER. 13.

*Ye said also, behold, what a weariness is it; and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of Hosts: And ye brought that which is torn, and the lame, and the sick: Thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord?*

**H**ere is the sin particular laid to the charge of these hypocrites: First, see the meaning: Words diversly read: Those that render it nearest the originall, thus; Ye say, behold, what weariness? Whereas, ye may even blow it away; wherein the Prophet even residueth the speeches of these hypocritical Jews, that, whereas they brought unto the Lord for sacrifices, the lightest, and sleightest of their flock, such as they might even blow away with a blast of their mouth; [*Hyperbole*]; yet they would pretend, that they were even tyred with the weight of the Sheep, and other Cattle, that they brought for sacrifice.

Now, This sence standing, affords us these two properties notorious in an hypocrite; 1. That he proclaims his Devotions to the world, and thinks all lost in the service of God, that mans eye sees not; In the *King. 16. 16.* When *Ishu* was going to the service the Lord employed him in, in the destruction of the Priests of *Baal*, and spared

*Obsev.*

spared *Jehonadab* the son of *Rechab*, *Come with me*, saith he, and [see] the zeal I have for the Lord of Hosts: And this our Saviour notes in the Pharisees, those grand hypocrites amongst the Jews, *Mat. 23. 5.* All their works they did, To be seen of men, as he gives instance in one particular: It was the Lords ordinance, *Num. 15. 38.* that the people of God, for the better remembrance of the Law of God, should weare in the borders of their garments, fringes; and upon the fringe of their borders, they put a Ribband of blew, &c. Now, these Pharisees, that they might be noted to be more extraordinarily careful to preserve the memory of the Law of God, and to deny their own wills, in matter of his worship, (though they were, indeed, the most superstitious Traditioners that ever lived) they made their Phylacteries broad, &c. The Action not evil, but, their Affectation damnable; and the reason is that, *Joh. 12. 43.* *They loved the praise of (men) more than the glory of God.*

Use.

Let it be our admonition, to take heed of this practice of hypocrites; as our Saviour warneth, on another occasion, *Mat. 6.* I say not, but it is lawfull, and necessary, to manifest devotion, that others may be drawn by our good example, *Mat. 5. 16.* But this, to affect the sight of men, and to call spectators, as *Jehu*, to be witnesses of our Devotions, that savours strongly of hypocrisy. Heare Christs reason; all is not lost that is done in secret: though men see not, God seeth; and hath his book of remembrance written, for those that feare him, *Mal. 3. 16.* 2 Thy piety will best be manifest, by Gods reward; In this life, his blessings shall follow thee, so that men shall say, surely, this man feares God, though condemned by us; for the Lord rewards him: or else, after this life.

And it reproves this vice, so rise in all states, whose own tongues must be the Trumpets of their own Praises; but, saith *Solomon*, *Let another mans mouth praise thee, and not thine own*: Hast thou been bountifull to the poore?

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Let their Lips bleſs thee, and let thy works praife thee, *Prov. 31.* and, let it be thy deſire, to approve thy heart unto God, to be upright : Take heed of vainglorious oſtentations; they are the brand of hypocrifie.

A ſecond property of an Hypocrite, is this; devouteſt in pretence, ſlendereſt in performance; Here, they ſay, they are tyred, with bringing ſo heavy a ſacrifice, when, [alas!] So ſlender, that they might blow it away : read *Iſa. 58.* and the Pharifees, *Mat. 23.* Emptieſt Veſſels ſound loudeſt; and the verieſt Hypocrite pretends moſt devotion.

See this, at this day, in Church of *Rome*; none in pretence, fuller; none, in truth, emptier, of ſound devotion; How many prayers have their Monks? creep at midnight to their devotions, to their Maſs, &c. as if they were the devouteſt men in the world; And, what are all their prayers, but meer Lip-labour? it being their rule, that Prayers never ſo barbarous, though without underſtanding, are acceptable unto God: And, how many, [alas!] in the Church of God, that would ſeem Pillars, on whoſe ſhoulders the whole building of the Church reſted; indeed, doing nothing, either by Doctrine, or life, that tends to building; like antique faces that ye ſhall ſee in Churches, at the bottome of pillars, that ſeem to bear all on their ſhoulders, being nothing elſe, indeed, but the meer complements of building: And, amongſt our people ignorant, whoſe lips move faſter, in their private devotion? Or, whoſe prayers more idle, and abominable? Having neither knowledg of the Word, to direct, nor faith, to aſſure them, nor ſenſe of wants, to enſlame their deſires of obtaining.

Well, Beloved, Let this ever be noted, in a Child of God, his performances moſt, his pretences leaſt; and, this the brand of an Hypocrite, to pretend greateſt, and pra-  
ctice the leaſt devotion.

If we take our common reading; that varies from the

Uſe.



*Observ.*

originall Text, though it be consonant to the Analogy of faith: Two other notes of unsound people, in the worship of God, are here propounded: 1. Wearisomness in the worship of God. 2. Impatience, and murmuring at divine impositions.

Wearisomness in the worship of God, A note of an unsound heart; *Amos* 8.5. When will the new Moon be gone? Reasons of this, are: 1. That their minds are settled on earthly things, and they are their Treasure; and thence it commeth, that every thing is irksome that deteyneth from them. 2. Lack of love to the Majesty of God; for surely, to such as love God, his Commandments are not grievous, *1 Joh.* 5.3. As it is said of *Jacob*, that his seven years service seemed unto him a short time, because he (loved) *Rachel*; *So,* &c. 3. That they feel no sweetness in the service of God; as *Peter*, *1 Pet.* 2.3. If they had ever tasted, how sweet the Lord is, they would long after the sincere milk of the Word.

Now see, whether this note of an unsound heart shew it self in our People, in hearing, prayer, &c. See but the behaviour of carnall men: At an idle Stage-play, men can sit half days, and nights; at their Cards, and Dice, whole nights; drudge after the world, all their life long, and never weary; but, when we come to a Sermon, every minute beyond the houre, seems tedious unto them, their devotion spent; and ever in Preaching, and Prayer, that is commended, short and sweet: Now, this I dare say; A man thus [alwaies] calling for shortness, (for that the service is wearisome) gives evidence, he never tasted of the sweetness of the Word of God: A Child of God is of an indefatigable desire, and unwearied endeavour, *1 Isa.* 58. 13. They call the Sabbath a delight, *Psal.* 110. 3. They came willingly at the days of assembling, *Psal.* 1. 2. Their delight is in the Law of God, and therein they meditate, day and night; And, *David* again, *When shall I be satisfied with the pleasures of thine House?* *Psal.* 42. 2. And, though



though it be true, that upon the best of us, sometimes, such irksomness creeps; yet this I know is true, it is bewailed of Gods Children, and earnestly striven against by all means.

## VER. 14.

*But, Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock, a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: For, I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.*

**H**ERE followeth the second part of the Chapter: A Curse denounced, wherein these Particulars: 1. The Curse. 2. The Reasons. First, From description of Hypocrites. Secondly, Of Gods Majesty. In the description of the Hypocrite; we see, 1. His Title, A Deceiver, Machinator, a plotter, and deviser, how to deceive, to wit, with shews of devotion: Deceivers they are: 1. Of God, in intension, dealing cunningly with him in his worship, vowing many things in extremities, performance none, or slender. 2. Of men. It shall not be amiss a little to note how: First, one cunning they have, that they may seem holy, and devout; they are commonly first, and sharpest in censuring, and condemning others, *Mat. 7.* In the mean time, dissolute in their own lives; and the least moats they can espy in another, their own beams in the mean time, dissembled; our Saviour carped at, for conversing with sinners, and oppressors; themselves notorious for rapines, and extreme oppression: A cunning sleight, and rife, at this day, among many; That they, Cenforiously, judg of others, take liberty over-enough, in their own lives: Whereas, true love covers, *1 Pet. 4. 8.* and is compassionate, *Gal. 6. 2.* A second cunning they have, in deceiving men withall, is externall conformity to the parts of the Worship of God; when as, in private

life, none more negligent, or careless, then they: If a man had seen the devotion of Pharisees, in their Prayers, would he not presently have said, behold, a devout man! yet, in private life who more abominable? measure thy self, then, by private carriage. But, their worst deceit is, That by all this, they beguile their own souls, as *Jam* 1. 26. failing of all their intentions.

*And voweth.*] Their second property is, that they are forward to vow the best, in their extremities; when Gods hand is upon them, nothing too dear for him; but, when Gods hand is removed, as if they repented their forwardness, they serve him with the corrupt: This ye may see, in *Pharaoh*, when Gods hand was upon him, *Moses* and *Aaron* sent for, sin confessed, great mind to let Gods people go; when Gods hand removed, then, to limit and distinguish; they might, but, their children must stay; then, (they) might go, but their Cattle must stay behind.

See we, whether this be not, in our people; when fear of death oppresseth them, then, how carefull will they be? If God restore them to health; then, all but delusion, as in *Achab*; A little for ease; health restored, no token of humiliation, or repentance: So, in spirituall extremities, whilest conscience affrights; all the world for a conscience; yet presently, their old Byas taken unto; Generall vow made in Baptisme broken.

Now, Beloved, Let us beware of this mark, and brand of Hypocrisie; and what we vow, let us make conscience to performe; it is ill dallying with the Lord: Let me add the Curse, as a reason to press it; Curse outward, *Ecc* 5. 4. 5. Inward, in hardness of heart, as we see in common practice, their last end worse, than their beginning.

And here I may take occasion to treat, shortly, of the Doctrine of Vows.

A Vow is a solemn, and holy promise made unto God, deliberately, and with advisement, whereby we bind our selves

selves to do, or omit something, that we know is acceptable unto him. I call it, first, A promise; next, a solemn, and religious promise, to put difference betwixt promises made unto men; Thirdly, unto God, because, this a part of Invocation, and Confession: The matter of Vows, things acceptable unto God.

Whether they may be made, under the Gospel? I take it, yes: perhaps, not that necessity now, that there was; but yet, lawfulness the same; because, 1. Helps of devotion, when rightly understood. 2. A common Vow made in Baptism, renewed in the Lords Supper, after the ordinance of God. 3. As testimonies of thankfulness, &c. Yet, indeed, sundry Caveats there are herein to be observed; let me touch the principall. First, Some concerne the matter of Vows; In this matter, are two things: 1. Lawfulness, 2. Possibility. Lawfulness; for, when we vow things unlawfull, we profane the name of God; nor can this be acceptable unto God: Against this condition signed those Jews, that had bound themselves with Vow and Oath; not to eat, till they had slain *Paul*; and those vile wretches, amongst the people of *Rome*, that with solemn receiving of the Sacrament, bind themselves to the murder of the Lords Anointed: Such those of our people, our Gallants especially, that vow revenge; and that Vow once made, no means of appeasement; thus, Vows that should be bonds of obedience, become obligations to rebellion, and disobedience.

2. Possibility of things, in our power, that we have ability, by grace, or other means, to perform; for, what a dallying were this with the Lord, and how presumptuous, on our part, to vow what we have not power to perform. Thus sin Papists, at this day, in vowing continency in single life; A thing out of compass of mans power, except there be speciall grace given of God: And, where as they say, so are repentance, new obedience, but, by grace, possible. Answer, Grace is of two sorts; one ne-

*Object.*

*Answer.*

cessary to Salvation; such repentance; this promised to all Gods Children, upon their endeavours: The other speciall, and given to none, but by speciall priviledge. 1 Cor. 7. 36.

A second Caveat to be respected, is, the state of our Persons; namely, That they be *sui juris*, Free men; Reason is, because otherwise, there is a disjointing of Gods Ordinance, and a robbing of men of that honour, which God hath given them: Therefore, *Num.* 30. when a Child, or wife, hath vowed any thing, without privity, and consent of Superiours, the Lord gave them power to abrogate it: And therefore they, in the Church of *Rome*, that allow unto children authority to vow Monastical life, without free consent of their Parents, abominable.

A third thing to be regarded, is, the manner, and grounds of vowing; See *Ecc.* 5. 2. *Be not rash with thy mouth, &c.* Deliberation, in this case, much to be regarded; as, first, of the matter, wherein *Jephthah* sinned, *Judg.* 11. Secondly, Whethen we have assurance of strength, and power, to perform what we vow, 1 Cor. 7. 35. otherwise, we make them snares unto us, and unnecessary entanglements. Thirdly, Whether God call us thereto, or no; for, then may we assure our selves of assistance in performance; And this calling is gathered; partly, by necessity; partly, by assurance of ability. Fourthly, the end; not merit; but, as helps to us in obedience: So, if a man shall find a Vow may be a bridle unto him, for some excessse, or a spurr to devotion; lawfull: not otherwise. Fifthly, That it be done seldome, and sparingly; otherwise, Satan gets advantage, and such wounds are grievous. Sixthly, That we be void of presumption; and therefore, good in all Vows, to interpose that condition; if God will, if God permit: Many, through presumption, have fallen, to their more grievous wound, as *Peter*, &c.

Last thing, is, performance of Vows; every where urged, as *Ecc.* 5. 4. & *Psal.* 116. 18. *Keep, & redouble, vow,* and

and pay unto the Lord ; *Vovete*, is *hortatorium* ; yet, *red-dite, imperatorium* : wherein, ancient Divines require three things. 1. Haste to performance; *Ecc. 5. 3.* Defer not to pay it ; this, in the common vow of Baptism, violated.

2. That it be full payment, without diminution ; See *Ecc. 5. 5.* I did not foresee what would betide ; as *Ananias, & Sapphira*, and our people. 3. Discretion ; this the sin of *Jephthah*, as *Hierom* saith, he was *in votendo stultus* ; *In reddendo, impius* : Folly he shewed, in vowing ; for, if it were generally understood, then, if a Dog, or an Ass had met him, he should have performed it ; again, as foolish in performance ; *Ecc. 1.* The Law of God had provided redemption of some, even lawfull Vows. 2. Being so fondly vowed, rashness was to be repented, but the Vow not to be performed : *Votum duplex, absolutum, conditionatum.*

Lastly, About dispensation with Vows ; the quare is, whether dispensable, or commutable ? Answer is, when as lawfully made unto God, cannot be dispensed withall, but by the Lord himself ; for none can dispence with the Commandements of God : Therefore, Papists here taxed.

And, let the Use of all this be this much unto us ; That what we have vowed unto God, we make conscience to perform, and so to perform, as we have vowed, *Ecc. 5. 5.* Vows are of two sorts ; publique, and solemn ; singular, and private, &c. I would be Author to no man to be hasty in vowing ; seriously weighing humane frailty ; but, if he have vowed, let him make conscience to perform.

For, *I am a great King.* ] First, in largeness of command. 2. In power of administering ; as appears, that he hath all Creatures at his command ; therefore styled, Lord of Hosts : His Kingdom is, of power, of grace ; of power, over the very wicked ; seen, in restrayning, in over-ruling, in destroying his Enemies : Of grace, in collecting, in protecting, in glorifying his Church.

The

Use.



Use.

The Use is, that we, therefore, serve him, with reverence, and fear, *Heb. 12. 28.* According to greatness, reverence usually proportioned; It is fearfull to fall into the hands of the living God.

*My name is dreadfull among the heathen.*] His name, that is, Himself: Dreadfull, that is terrible, and withall reverend; Terrible, to the Wicked; reverend, to his dearest servants: There is, indeed, a double fear of God; one, servile, and even astonishing: The other reverentiall, and is nothing else, but that awe, and filiall reverence, that is in Gods Children towards his Majesty; And it ariseth from these grounds: 1. One is apprehension of the Majesty of God. 2. Beholding of his Judgments. 3. Apprehension of his love.

Thus they differ: 1. In causes, and in manner of apprehending Gods Majesty; wicked apprehend him only as a Judge, and an Avenger, *1. Sam. 2. 19.* The godly, as a Father, also, in Christ, *Hos. 3. ult.* 2. In effects, slavish fear drives utterly from God, *Gen. 4. 31. 1. Sam. 28. 7.* Filiall brings nearer unto him. 3. Slavish fear, torments; Filiall, comforts. 4. Slavish fear restrains, indeed, because hell provided; filiall, because sin offensive unto God.

Use.

Try how thou fearest God; Thou canst by no better mean know it, than this here prescribed, by thy reverend carriage in the worship of God.





## CHAP. 2. VER. 1, 2, &amp;c.

*And now, O ye Priests, this Commandement is for you : If ye will not heare, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a Curse npon you, and will curse your Blessings ; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart, &c.*



Umme of the Text, A perswasion of the Levites to do their duty, in reforming the worship of God ; by an Argument of the perill of the contrary neglect.

Parts.  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ A Preface, ver. 1} \\ 2 \text{ A Commination; where,} \\ \text{in are three things.} \end{array} \right.$

1. The condition interposed, which if neglected, the judgments threatned shall certainly be inflicted.

2. The Judgments threatned ; as, first, Curse of their Blessings. Secondly, Corrupting their seed. Thirdly, Casting dung in their faces.

3. The Reasons : First, from the Lords mercy towards them. Secondly, their swerving from that Covenant, and the example of their Predecessors ; the foulness whereof is amplified.

The Preface hath in it, an Apostrophe, and turning of the speech generall, to the Persons of the Priests.

Collection hence, this ; It is lawfull for a Minister, in Preaching, to particularize, that is, to direct his reproofs, threat-

*Observ.*

threatnings, &c. to particular persons, and States; See *Hos. 5. 1*, &c. Christ, to Scribes, and Pharisees.

Reasons, What is spoken to every one, seems spoken to no one: And hence is that shifting of the stroke of the Word from themselves, through the subtilty of Satan, Hypocrisie of heart, and love of our sins. Secondly, The Apostle gives this Precept, *1 Tim. 5. 20.* That we should thus deal even with Elders; whose credit (if any) should be most spared; if they sin openly, rebuke openly: Reason, That the rest may fear.

Caveats here are: First, That the Fact be publique, *Mat. 18.* In private sins, another course to be holden, so long as any hope of Reformation appears. 2. That it be evident; either, by the Fact, or, by Confession; or, by Witnesse, of the fact; See *1 Cor. 5.* of witnesses, *1 Tim. 5. 19.*

Use.

And this the Doctrine, the Practice whereof so distastefull to carnall men; whose sins, though never so notorious, and scandalous, may not be pointed at, except in generalities: And, generall Preaching generally applauded by most, as standing best with a Ministers discretion: But, Beloved, if we will follow the wisdom of Gods Spirit in the Prophets, and Apostles, we shall see another course warranted to a Minister, in notorious, and scandalous sins; *Paul*, in a publique Epistle, notes the incestuous person, *1 Cor. 5.* And, why a Minister may not so deal with men publickly offensive, I see not; as, if there be any in our own Congregation, known Brablers; as, of late, the Fact is evident in one, whose bond to the good behaviour might have taught him better carriage; To whom, if I should now, as *Malachy* here, turn my speere, and tell him, vengeance is the Lords; and, that he that smites with the sword, shall perish with the sword, I see not but I follow a president, beyond exception: And view, if you will; the small effects that come of generall Teaching, in all Congregations, where it is used; Little or no good done, while particular abuses, in particular persons, are  
gene.

generally only reproved : But, Learn we hence to submit our selves, without murmuring, to this kind of Teaching ; and ever think, that Preacher preacheth best, that can best particularize; and in whose mouth, Prophecy is the discoverer of our secret, and particular corruptions, 1 Cor. 14. 25.

*This Commandement is for you.* ] To wit, of reforming Religion, and the worship of God.

So then, It is a duty specially belonging to Ministers to see to the Reformation of Religion, and maintaining thereof, in purity ; See for this, *Tit. 1.* Let us see how this is to be understood. Papists understand it, Exclusively, so that they would not have Civill Magistrates to have any thing to do, in matters of Religion, and the worship of God : Now, that even in matters Ecclesiasticall, the Civill Magistrate hath power of commanding, appears : 1. *Signis, Dent. 17. 18.* A charge is given, that the Book of the Law be delivered to the King, not only for private information of his life ; but, as *Austin* well saith, That he might provide, that others also observe it. 2. *A minori,* If Fathers, in Families, must deale in information of Households, how much more the King? 3. *1 Tim. 2. 2.* Godliness, as well as honesty, must be promoted by them. 4. *Judg. 17. and 18.* Neglect of Reformation is imputed to lack of Magistrates, which, what argues it, but a duty to promote purity of the worship of God. 5. Kings in *Judah,* and *Israel,* blamed for tollerating abuses, commended for care in reforming, *Ergo, &c.*

Briefly, That we may see, what the duty of Civill Magistrates is, in this kind ; See we what they may not meddle with. Secondly, what concerns them, in duty, in this kind. 1. The execution of Ministeriall Functions belongs not unto them, because, they are not thereto called, *Heb. 5. 4.* Therefore, *Saul* blamed for this, *1 Sam. 13.* In that, being a King, he would take upon him, to burn Sacrifice; and *Uzziah,* *2 Chron. 26. 16,* is said, to transgress the

*Observ.*

Commandement of the Lord herein ; and *Amaziah* well tells him, it is not for him, to burn Incense ; and, the Lord strikes him with Leprosie.

See we, now, what it is, that belongs unto them. 1 Making Laws, for stablishing pure Religion, abolishing of false ; See this, as, in *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan. 3.* so in *Josiah*, &c. commended. 3. To see to the execution of those Laws ; So, it is said of *Josiah*, he compelled those that were found in *Israel*, and *Judah*, to serve the Lord, 2 *Chr. 34. 33.* 4. To enjoin every Church-Officer, to see to his office, and place, 2 *King. 23. 4.* 5. To assign to every one his particular station, and calling, in the Church, 2 *Chro. 17. 7.* 6. To correct, and punish omissions : So that, this Doctrine is not, exclusively, to be understood, in respect of the Civill Magistracy ; but serves only to awaken the Priests, that were, in this point of duty, most negligent : And, parts of the Priests duty, this way, are : 1. To teach. 2. To exercise Discipline,

Therefore, how well they discharge Ministeriall Offices, that are the foremost in corrupting the sincere worship of God ; consider we : Corruptions in Religion are of two sorts : 1. In matter. 2. In manner. In matter, when means of worship not prescribed, are brought in by men, as *Mat. 15. 9.* How full of such Corruptions is the Church of *Rome* ? In manner, when abuses in the worship of God, are tolerated : Secondly, See here, what we have to answer to that common objection of the people ; That we meddle where we need not, when we oppose ourselves to corruptions in Religion : As, to insist in one particular, Profane abuse of the Sacrament ; the common saying is, The unworthy Communicant shall himself smart for his profaneness, True ; yet the Minister also, For, to him is this Commandement given, to inhibit, as much as in him lyeth, all profaning of the Lords holy Ordinances.

Observ.

Proceed we to the threatning : Wherein we may observe,

serve, how the Lord, in threatning of Judgment, interposeth condition of obedience, and repentance; which if performed, the streame of Gods judgments is stayed; See *Jer.* 18. 7, 8, 9, 10.

See then, how true it is, what the Lord professeth of himself, *Ezek.* 33. 11. That he delights not in the death of sinners, but rather would, they should convert and live, that every mouth may be stopped: And see, whether ever the Lord was hasty (before warning) to execute judgment upon any people: The old world had corrupted their waies before God; yet not suddenly swept away, but *Noah* (a Preacher of righteousness) given to warn them; So, in *Sodom*, *Lots* example, and admonitions; So *Hierusalem*; often would the Lord have gathered them; with our selves, the Lord hath thus dealt.

Use 1.

Then, that we may avert, and turn away the judgments of God from us: See our duty, of two branches: 1. To hear, that is, with attention and regard, to mark what the Lord requireth of us. 2. To lay it to heart: And, this duty hath in it two things: First, Due consideration of what the Lord enjoynes. Secondly, Resolution, and care, to put it into practice; the other without this, nothing. Lastly, To give glory to God, by reforming abuses, crept in upon us.

Use 2.

Beloved, The Lord hath come near unto us, in sundry judgments: Pestilence hath long dwelt in our Land; Famine and scarcity have been oft amongst us: greater Judgments may be expected, if these be neglected; and yet, who cares to heare? Or, hearing, who considers? Or, considering, who reforms? So that, just must needs be our destruction, whensoever the Lord shall bring it upon us.

See the Judgments: 1. Curse their blessings, that is, weaken their abundance. 2. Corrupting their seed, so taking away hope of recovery. 3. Cast dung upon their



faces, that is, extremity of vileness, and contempt : And, the cause of all this, corruptions in Religion.

*Observ.*

Corruptions in Religion cause of most judgments of God : See *Neh. 13. 81. Did not your fathers thus*, and all this wrath is come upon us? *Jer. 44.* Their Incense-burning to the Queen of Heaven, true cause of Gods judgments ; *Hag. 1.* The people wonder at their Famine ; the Lord sets them down this, one true cause, and reason of it, His house lay waste, *ver. 9, 10. Exod. 32.* The Calf incenseth him.

*Use.*

See we, then, to what cause we may impute all those heavy Plagues, wherewith the Lord hath so long followed us ; surely, no doubt, this the main, Neglect of Religion, and of the worship of God, in Princes, Priests, People. And, this let us all be assured of : Never to have peace, till abominations, this way, be removed from us : And, therefore, let us all be admonished, for our particulars, here to begin Reformation, at the worship, that it may please him, to turn away his fierce wrath, that he hath determined to bring upon us ; many are the corruptions, that are grown in upon us, this way : Resolve we, every of us, with *Josuah, cap. 24. 15. As for me, and my house, We will serve the Lord.*

*Observ.*

*I will corrupt your seed.*] So then, God is he, that is, the inflicter of all judgments : From him come Famine, Poverty, Infamy, &c. *Amos 3. 6. No evil in the City, but the Lord hath done it ;* So *Isa. 45. 7. Job 5. 6.* Affliction riseth not out of the dust.

*Use.*

*Manichees*, then, are here refuted, who dream'd of a double, or twofold beginning ; one, Author of good things ; The other, of evil. For the understanding whereof, know we ; That nothing is *summum malum*, inflicting of pains a part of Justice, and therefore hath in it some respect of goodness. Again, amongst our people, Luck and Fortune carry away all : But, though in respect of us, that know not second causes, some events may be termed casual,

casuall; yet in respect of God, all things are determined; not a sparrow falls to the ground, without our father, *Mat. 10. 30.* Some stick in second Causes, impute famine to drought, &c. But, though it be true, that judgments are many times executed by second causes; yet so, as that the first Cause orders all, barrenness comes of drought, but the Lord makes drought; *Hag. 1. 11.* *I called for a drought, &c.* Therefore, Learn we to whom, in all judgments, to resort; See *Hos. 6. 1.* To the Lord, it is he who smites, and he only must heale.

VER. 4, 5.

*And ye shall know that I have sent this Commandement unto you, that my covenant might be in Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. My covenant was with him, of life and peace; and I gave them to him, for the fear, wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my Name.*

**F**ollow now the Reasons: 1. From the speciall mercy of God bestowed upon them, and their fore-fathers: Gods Covenant was with them, of life and peace.

Now, Gods Covenant is of foure sorts. 1. Generall, made with all Creatures, *Gen. 9.* 2. With the Church, in generall. 3. With the Church of the Elect. 4. With some particulars, of some speciall graces: of this last, must this place be understood, God having entred a Covenant with them especially, to give them life, and peace

So then, with Ministers especially, hath the Lord made a Covenant of Peace, binding himself, especially, to be a mighty Protector, and gracious rewarder of them: And therefore ye shall see, in evill times, how the Lord hath given speciall charge of them; *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harme;* hath made speciall promise of assistance, and protection, unto them, *Mat. 18.* and we see sundry examples hereof; as, if ye read the whole

*Observ.*

scri-

Scriptures you shall not see any to whom more special deliverances vouchsafed, than unto them; See in *Jeremy, Elijah, Peter, &c.* God was their portion.

Use 1.

And, this should be our encouragement, unto whom the Dispensation of the word is committed, courageously to do our duties; *Jer.* 1. 18. It is true, that of all men, we are most subject to the hatred of the world, as being those whom the Lord hath called to deale with the sins of men; but yet, if we shall look up to our God, that hath made Covenant with us; least cause have we, of all others, to fear the malice, or power of Adversaries.

Use 2.

This should be an admonition unto the people, to take heed, how they attempt any malicious courses against them: The Lord hath said, concerning his people, in generall; he that toucheth them, toucheth the <sup>e</sup> Apple of his eye; but, more speciall care of Ministers hath he, every where, protested: And, would God, this could sink into the hearts of those wretchless people amongst us, whose indignities and wrongs, no men taste more.

*e* Zech. 2. 8.

*For the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.* ] Here have we *Levi's* behaviour, in the Covenant, declared by the cause, effects, and signs of it. Feare of God, is an affection of the heart, whereby we reverence the Majesty of God, and flye from his offence, in all things.

What the fear  
of God is.

Of it there are three kinds: 1. Meerly servile, such in Devils, *Jam.* 2. 19. 2. Meerly Filiall, such in the Saints in heaven. 3. Mixt of both; which is that only, whereof we partake in this life: The first of these ariseth only from judgments, either felt, or feared; and only, in that regard, restraineth: The second, from Gods goodness, and feeling of his mercy, *Hof.* 3. *ult.* and, in respect thereof, causeth to depart from evill: The last, from both; partly, from fear of judgment; partly, from sence of mercy: But, Let us see the properties, and effects of it. 1. It causeth a reverence of the Majesty of God; therefore, the Lord called

called, *The fear of Jacob*; and sheweth it self partly, in speaking reverently of God, and his services; partly, in trembling at his words; partly, in a seemly carriage in all things, as in the presence of God; together with a constant care to depart from evill, and a stout courage in good causes, and courses: Try by these things.

And, *I gave them to him.* ] Here, we observe, That fear of God is his own gift; See *Jer.* 32. 40. And, this appears by that generall depravation of nature, whereby, since the fall of *Adam*, we are destitute of all saving grace, *Rom.* 3. 18. Naturall men are thus described, No fear of God before their eyes; apparent, by effects contrary, running into all excess of riot, without any bridle, or restraint, till this gift of God be obteyned.

*Observe.*

If this be so, where is that Doctrine of free-will, taught by the Church of *Rome*?

*Use.*

And secondly, see the excellency of this gift; *Jer.* 32. 40. set out in the Scripture, by sundry Arguments: 1. It is made the note of a Child of God; therefore, it is the usuall description of men Religious, to be such as fear the Lord. 2. Blessedness promised unto it, *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.* 3. The immunity that such men have, in common judgments.

Wherefore, blest God, if he have given it unto thee; and think him more mercifull to thee, in this, than if he had given thee all the wealth of the world, severed from it: This, indeed, by earth-wormes, commonly counted faint-heartedness; whereas it is, indeed, The highest point of wisdom, and courage.

Scriptures you shall not see any to whom more special deliverances vouchsafed, than unto them; See in *Jeremy, Elijah, Peter, &c.* God was their portion.

*Use 1.*

And, this should be our encouragement, unto whom the Dispensation of the word is committed, courageously to do our duties; *Jer.* 1. 18. It is true, that of all men, we are most subject to the hatred of the world, as being those whom the Lord hath called to deal with the sins of men; but yet, if we shall look up to our God, that hath made Covenant with us; least cause have we, of all others, to fear the malice, or power of Adversaries.

*Use 2.*

*e Zech.* 2. 8.

This should be an admonition unto the people, to take heed, how they attempt any malicious courses against them: The Lord hath said, concerning his people, in general; he that toucheth them, toucheth the <sup>c</sup> Apple of his eye; but, more special care of Ministers hath he, every where, protested: And, would God, this could sink into the hearts of those wretched people amongst us, whose indignities and wrongs, no men taste more.

What the fear  
of God is.

*For the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.* ] Here have we *Levi's* behaviour, in the Covenant, declared by the cause, effects, and signs of it. Feare of God, is an affection of the heart, whereby we reverence the Majesty of God, and flye from his offence, in all things.

Of it there are three kinds: 1. Meerly servile, such in Devils, *Jam.* 2. 19. 2. Meerly Filiall, such in the Saints in heaven. 3. Mixt of both; which is that only, whereof we partake in this life: The first of these ariseth only from judgments, either felt, or feared; and only, in that regard, restraineth: The second, from Gods goodness, and feeling of his mercy. *Hos.* 3. ult. and, in respect thereof, causeth to depart from evill: The last, from both; partly, from fear of judgment; partly, from sence of mercy: But, Let us see the properties, and effects of it. 1. It causeth a reverence of the Majesty of God; therefore, the Lord called



called, *The fear of Jacob*; and sheweth it self partly, in speaking reverently of God, and his services; partly, in trembling at his words; partly, in a seemly carriage in all things, as in the presence of God; together with a constant care to depart from evil, and a stout courage in good causes, and courses: Try by these things.

And, *I gave them to him.* ] Here, we observe, That fear of God is his own gift; See *Jer. 32. 40.* And, this appears by that generall depravation of nature, whereby, since the fall of *Adam*, we are destitute of all saving grace, *Rom. 3. 18.* Naturall men are thus described, No fear of God before their eyes; apparent, by effects contrary, running into all excess of riot, without any bridle, or restraint, till this gift of God be obtayned.

*Observe.*

If this be so, where is that Doctrine of free-will, taught by the Church of *Rome*?

*Use.*

And secondly, see the excellency of this gift; *Jer. 32. 40.* set out in the Scripture, by sundry Arguments: 1. It is made the note of a Child of God; therefore, it is the usuall description of men Religious, to be such as fear the Lord. 2. Blessedness promised unto it, *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.* 3. The immunity that such men have, in common judgments.

Wherefore, bless God, if he have given it unto thee; and think him more mercifull to thee, in this, than if he had given thee all the wealth of the world, severed from it: This, indeed, by earth-wormes, commonly counted faint-heartedness; whereas it is, indeed, The highest point of wisdom, and courage.

## VER. 6.

*The Law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips : He walked with me in peace, and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.*

A second reason, why the Lord threatens to inflict those judgments, upon the Levites, was, their swerving from those good precedents set before them, by their Fore-fathers. And, it is handled in a plenary Comparison of unlikes ; The *Protasis* whereof contains an explication of *Levi's* behaviour ; The *Apodosis* expresth their swerving from the pattern set them, *ver. 8:*

Now, before I proceed to particular handling, it is fit ; First, to remove the glosses of Papists. Hence they infer, That it is possible for some man, in the state of this life, to walk so inoffensively, and perfectly before God, that he may merit, and deserve Salvation ; one argument for which they take hence : indeed, they confess, that we cannot ordinarily live without veniall sins ; but, without mortall sins, that is, such as deserve, in their own nature, death, we may : Now, against the state of such perfection, the Scripture every where speaks : The Apostle, *Rom. 7. 23.* expressing the state of himself, and others, in state of grace, confesseth, that he was led captive to the Law of sin ; and, least they should say, they were veniall sins, he acknowledgeth them deadly, when 'as he calleth the corruption, whence they proceeded, to be a body of death : And, in many things, we offend all ; shall we say, venially ? Nay, deadly, *Rom. 6. 23.* For, The wages of every sin, is death.

Hear the Reasons : 1. Because, but, in part, sanctified, *1 Cor. 13. 15.* 2. Knowledge, in part. 3. The perfectest fear tryall, in extremity of justice, which they would not do, were their works perfect, *Psa. 43. 2.* 4. Taught to pray for forgiveness. Wherefore, if we may live free from mortal

mortall, only with veniall sins, why may we not perfectly expiate?

What then is that perfection, that the Scripture speaks of? Answer, 1. Perfection in Christ. 2. Perfection in Parts. 3. Uprightness, and sincerity of heart, in all duties, when we are free from hypocrisie; And this is that, here, commended in *Levi*.

In this verse, then, we have two things.

1. The behaviour of *Levi*; in two things; In Doctrine; and in life. In Doctrine, Truth, and it only: In life, peaceable, and equall carriage: In both, sincerity, and uprightnes before God: Where, 2. we have the effect of these two, *He turned many from iniquity*.

See here the description of a true Pastor, in foure qualities: 1. That they are Teachers. 2. Teachers of truth only, without mixture of errours, or humane inventions. 3. That they are men of inoffensive life. 4. That they are upright in all these, and walk as with God. Their first good property, is, That they are Teachers; therefore, it is said, that the Law of truth was not only in his braine, or in his heart, but that it was in his lips, and in his mouth; therefore, we are called, Feeders of others, *Joh. 21. 15. Voices, Mat. 3. 3. Aaron* had Bells on the skirts of his Garment, and his sound must be heard, when he goes into the Tabernacle.

*Observe.*

Second property, That, as he taught, so he taught truth, and meere truth, without wilfull mixture of falsehood, or other corruptions; therefore *Paul*, as he bids us preach, so to preach the Word, *2 Tim. 4. 3. 4.* and, it must be wholsome Doctrine; and, Pharisees are blamed, not, for that they taught nothing but error, (for some truth they taught, *Mat. 23. 1. 2.*) but, for that they (mingled) errours, and humane devices; *Mat. 16. 6.* as *Leaven* that soured the whole lump.

Third this, That as he taught well; so, he lived uprightly, and inoffensively; a singular duty of a Minister;

See *1 Tim.* 3. As much care takes the Apostle, to instruct touching life, as a liberty of teaching : and *Mat.* 5. 16. Let light shine by good works ; See *1 Cor.* 9. ult. and the mystery of *Urim*, and *Thummim*, that is, light, and perfection, that ought to be in the Priests.

Fourth, That all this was done, in sincerity, and uprightness of heart : this that *Paul* challengeth to himself, *2 Cor.* 1. 12, and counts it his chief comfort ; walking with God ; that is, when a man is not carried away with the streame of the times, but keeps on a constant endeavour of approving himself, and his heart, to God.

Use 1.

Reproved here all such, as in place of Teachers, teach not at all ; and these, of two sorts : 1. Some, for lack of ability, as, how many amongst our selves, in this Church of *England*. 2. All such, as having ability, yet use not their gifts, to the good of Gods people ; See *1 Cor.* 12. 7. the gifts of the Spirit are given, to profit withall ; called dispensers, *1 Cor.* 4. 1. and, *1 Pet.* 4. 10. As we have received, so we must minister the same gift, to edification.

Secondly, Those that teach, but teach unsoundly ; whether gross errors, or quirks of their own wit : The Apostle dealing against this kind of Teaching, thus saith, That their labour, and reward is all lost, *1 Cor.* 3. 15. They profane the Temple of God ; and the Lord shall destroy such.

Thirdly, Those that teaching truths, and nothing but truths, yet walk inordinately, to the disgrace of truth, hinderance of the Gospell : How many such are every where ? causing Christs ordinances, as the Sons of *Eli*, *1 Sam.* 2. 17. did the Lords sacrifices, by their ungracious lives, to be loathed.

Fourthly, That are outwardly painfull, and honest ; yet, without uprightness of heart, in the sight of God ; *Phil.* 1. 15. Some such spoken of, that preached Christ, indeed, but it was, out of envy, or, for filthy Lucre ; such

an

an one was *Judas*; And, would God, many such did not discover themselves dayly; their sins cannot be hid. *1 Tim. 5. 24.*

Now, this, as it teacheth us, in place of Ministry, to labour to be such; so you that are the people, to pray God to give such Pastors unto his people; *Mat. 9. ult.* Pray God, that he would thrust forth Labourers into his harvest. Beloved, How our Church groans under the burden of such idle, Idoll, or profane shepherds, we see, and can talk of; would God, we could heartily bewaile, and, as becomes us, pray heartily, for redress; no doubt, we should see the work of the Lord goe faster forward.

Use 2.

*And did turne many away from iniquity.*] In this clause, we have expressed the effect of these Levites, thus demeaning themselves: They turned many from iniquity.

Sense: How is this said of the Ministry, when conversion is made the peculiar work of God? Answer, As to Instruments, because, by them, the Lord works conversion, faith, repentance, &c. Therefore, we are said, to save others, *1 Tim. 4. ult.* to wit, as Instruments; because, without us, God ordinarily, saves none; and, by us, and the foolishness of Preaching, saves them that believe; therefore, *1 Cor. 3. 9.* said to be *συνεργοὶ θεοῦ*, fellow-workers with God, and Instruments effectually; Ministers, by whom ye have believed; so to remit sins, as Instruments, and Ministers.

So then, here observe, That the Ministry of the Word, in the mouth of a faithfull Pastor, is not ineffectually, but is Gods strong power to Salvation, *Rom. 1. 16.* See *Isa. 8. 18.* *Loe me, and the children which thou hast given me*, *2 Cor. 10. 4.* The weapons of our warfare are not carnall, but mighty; through God; *Heb. 4. 12.* mighty in operation; *1 Cor. 14. 25.* Prophecy humbles, and makes fall down.

Observe.

The reason whereof is, The promise of God, and his



good pleasure ; *I will be with you*, that is, not only to protect you, and to assist and enable you ; but, to bless your Ministry. Object. Sometimes ineffectually. Answer. A double effect of the Minister, *1 Cor. 2. 15, 16. Isa. 55. 10.* As the show, and the raine. 2. Fruit may be, that is not seen, as in *Elias* his time, seven thousand, but invisible, *Rom. 11. 4. Act. 18. 10.* much people in that City. 3. Though blessing promised, yet times and seasons kept in Gods power ; as *Act. 18. 10.* The day of visitation is not come.

Use 1.

This should be our encouragement, to whom the Ministry of the word of God is committed, if we walk uprightly, in the sight of God : howsoever, perhaps, we see not, at the first, the fruits of our labours ; yet (keeping our selves in the waies of God) and waiting on him, we expect a blessing.

It is truly a discomfortable thing to be a Minister, to take paines, where no fruit appears ; it made *Jeremy* resolve to speak no more in the name of the Lord. *Jer. 20. 9.* and secondly, *Paul* shakes his raiment, *Act. 18. 6.* but is reprov'd of the Lord.

Use 2.

This should teach us, not to despise the Ministry of the word of God, being ordained to be so powerfull an Instrument to convert : many such speeches there be of profane men, they cannot remember, that ever they were the better for any Sermon they heard ; It may well so be ; for, this seed takes not root in all grounds. But, this I dare say, He that with an honest heart hath heard, *Luk. 8. 15.* can say, He sold some hath heard Sermon, but, he hath been bettered thereby : how powerfull feele we it ripping up corruptions, in humbling for sins, in furthering with comfort, &c? And, let such as have not felt their power, suspect their State.

## VER. 7.

*For the Priests lips should keep knowledge, and, they should seek the Law at his mouth; for, he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

**G**Loss of Papists: Hence they deduce, That Priests cannot erre; how absurdly; See *ver. 8. They had forsaken the way, and caused many to fall*: Know we, then, That this no promise, but a prescription of duty. The Lord doth not promise, that they shall be free from error; but prescribes what were their duties, namely, to labour to be even a treasure-house of knowledge for the people of God: so also, that place, *1. Tim. 3.* understood of Office, not of Fact.

Hence, then, may we observe, What the Office of a Pastour is. He must be such an one, as is stored with knowledge of the will of God; See *Mat. 13. 52.* The good Scribe, &c. Those many offices required of us, shew it; as, to be able to resolve all doubts, to convince errors, &c. *Tir. 1. 9.*

*Obser.*

This knowledge is of two sorts: 1 Theoreticall. 2 Experimentall; both these necessary in a Minister.

And it should teach us, as *Paul. 1 Tim. 4. 13.* to give attendance unto reading, &c. Ignorance and Idleness, fit not (of all men else) a Minister. Secondly, Pray God for such; it is his great blessing, when such are given, *Jer. 3. 15.* to feed us with knowledge, and with understanding.

*Use.*

The next is, the duty of the people, in respect of such a Minister; to seek the Law at his mouth.

Hence then we collect, That it is Gods ordinance, the people shall depend on the Ministry of the Word; See *1 Thes. 5. 28. Despise not Prophecy; Heb. 10. 25. Forsake not our assembling together.* For this cause, many difficulties, and obscurities mingled in Scriptures; many things hard to be understood, perverted by the unlearned,

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*f 2 Pet. 3. 16.*

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*Observ.*

*f 1 Pet. 3. 16.*

and

and unstable; of which we may say, as the Eunuch to *Philip, Acts 8, 31*. How can I understand, without a guide, or an Interpreter? And secondly, For this cause, it pleaseth God, by little and little, to give his graces; a little knowledg, a little experience; Wherefore? But that he may continually keep, as it were, an appetite, and edge, upon our desires? Therefore also many decayes, as in buildings, *Ephes. 4*. that what we seemed best to know, we forget; comfort and consolation, not stable, &c. namely, by this means, to evidence the necessity of using an Interpreter.

*Use.*

Therefore, Beloved, they are deceived, and do deprive themselves of much comfort, that content themselves with their own private meditation, and study of the word of God; and refuse, or neglect publique Ministry: That they use private endeavours, I blame not, but that they neglect the publique Ministry; this is their heavy sin, and unspeakable discomfort. And yet, I know a common opinion, and practice of many, that they are perswaded, by private reading, they may come to know God, in Christ, to Salvation. Now, Beloved, I will not say simply, but that some man, namely such an one, as to whom the Lord denies the publique Ministry, may come to saving faith, by reading; no nor, but that a man living in the Church, may come to a great measure of discoursing knowledg. But this I say, A man that may heare, and will not; and contents himself with private duties; he shall never come to know God, to Salvation. The Reason is, God usually breaks not his ordinary course, when it may be had. 2. He hath cursed all private devotions, where the publique Ministry is contemned, *Pro. 28.9*. *He that turneth his ear from hearing the Law, his prayer shall be abominable*; his study, reading, all is accursed unto him: And therefore, mark when you will, such men, how it pleaseth God to give them up, many times, to foul and gross errors, in judgment, and life: wherefore, I say again, Despise not Prophecying.

*He*



*He is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.* ] 1. His Office. 2. The Author of it: See we the message, *Rom.* 10. 15. 2. *Cor.* 5. 20. From whom sent, from the Lord of Hosts.

Now, this teacheth us that are Ministers, sundry duties: 1. Not to add, alter, or diminish any thing of that Message the Lord hath put into our mouths; this the office of a good Messenger. Secondly, You that are the people, are taught, with meekness and reverence, to entertaine our Message, howsoever distastefull unto you; considering we are but Messengers. Thirdly; seeing Messengers of the Lord of Hosts; you are taught reverence to us, in respect of our Message: The contempt of a Minister, in respect of his Message, is the contempt of him that sends, *Mat.* 10. 40. And, that contempt the Lord will never suffer to go unpunished: When *David* saw, how his Messengers, whom he sent to *Hannan*, to entreat of peace betwixt them, were used, or rather abused by him, his wrath is enkindled, and justly, against him: And, let all those that despise Ministers, lay it to heart; Ye have heard of the sins of *Sodom*, and *Gomorrab*; and how the Lord made them examples of his vengeance; believe it, for the mouth of truth hath spoken it; very Sodomy it self, is not a heavier sin, nor more severely punished in hell, than this of despising a Minister, in the faithfull discharge of his Ministry.

*Observ.*

*2 Sam. 10.*

VER. 8.

*But ye are departed out of the way: ye have caused many to stumble at the Law: ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

**O**Rdinary Pastors (many) erre, and teach false Doctrine: For Explication, Pastors of the Church, are of two sorts; some extraordinarily raised up by the

*Observ.*

L

Lord,

Lord, extraordinarily assisted by his Spirit; such were Prophets, and Apostles, of whom *Peter* saith, *2 Pet. 1. ult.* That they spake not, of any private motion, but even as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost: Ordinary, such as by ordinary calling are deputed to the Office of Teaching; of these, whether alone, or collected, it is true, they may erre.

First, That they have erred; See *Mat. 23.* Scribes and Pharisees sat in *Moses* Chair, had ordinary calling, and succession, without interruption; yet had they Leaven mingled with their Doctrine, *Mat. 18. 8.* And, lest any should say, That [Singularly] they might erre, but not [Collected;] See *Mat. 15. 64.* High Priest, and all assembled, and yet conclude of Christ, He had blasphemed. Secondly, if not, then because they spake infallibly, by inspiration of the holy Ghost: But, this not; for, then it will follow, that their decrees are *theōkrata*, and so, of equall authority with the Scripture. Thirdly, if not, this, either in respect of Multitude, or Wisdome, or Holiness, or Promise; but, first, Multitude frees them not, as in *Isaiah* 8 Prophets; and that warning, agree not with a Multitude, *Exod. 23. 2.* Secondly, Not in respect of their Wisdome, for, they are not alwaies the wisest, that are assembled in Councells. Thirdly, Not in respect of holiness; for, themselves confessing, They may be as lewd as any. 4. Nor in respect of promise. If any alledge, *Joh. 16. 18.* Answer, That promise, in that measure, made to the Apostles; and that, as well separate, as collected.

Besides all this; experience sheweth it: *Concilium Laodiceum* approves only the books, that are now received; *Trident* concludes the Apocryphall; one must needs erre: Councill of *Neocasarea*, against second marriages, and will have Priests put them to penance, that admit them; yet *S. Paul* warrants them, *Rom. 7. 3. 1 Cor. 7. 39.* Councill of *Nice* ordained rebaptization for all, that had followed *Paulus Samositanus*.

Object.

Object. The high Priest of the New Testament cannot Answer, True, if understood of Christ : But, if of the Pope, ye shall see experience. *Liberius* subscribed to Arrianisme. *John* the 22 that the souls of the wicked should not, at all, be punished, till the day of Judgment, and this he sends Preachers to publish. *John* the 23. That the souls of men are mortall; and that there is no Resurrection, nor Life after this. *Honorius* a Monothelite, and this he did dogmatizare, deliver by way, and as in the nature of a decree; What needs more?

Heare Reasons proving it : 1 Ignorance, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. 2. Imperfect Sanctification. 3. No promise of Infallible, and incessant assistance; that promise peculiar to Apostles, *Joh.* 16. 12.

Let it teach us that wisdom that *S. Paul* prescribes, *To try all things*, 1 *Thes.* 5. 21. 1 *Joh.* 4. 1. and even to fill our selves with knowledg of the Word of God ; And never so much admire any Minister, be his gifts never so reverend, as not to bring him to the common tryall, and touchstone : And, if ever this Exhortation needfull, now are the Times ; wherein you shall see a manifest going out of the way, and a reviving of old Errours. And, in such Times, lamentable the case of men ignorant, or negligent, this way ; And, let no man say, Their Teachers shall answer. Though that be true, yet thou perishest also with them, *Mat.* 15. 14.

*Ye have caused many to stumble at the Law.* ] So seldom falls a Minister alone, but draws many with him into fellowship of errours, and corrupt manners; See 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. their speech frets like a Canker, and encreaseth to more ungodlines; See *Gal.* 2. 14. *Peters* example compulsory, &c. Now, this causing many others to fall, is, partly, through neglect of Instruction ; partly, through connivance ; partly, through example : So that a Ministers Errours, whether in Judgment, or Practice, enwrap many others in the same condemnation ; See *Jer.* 10. 21. The

Use.

Observe.

Pastors were become brutish, therefore, all the Flocks of their Pastures are scattered; as when a maine stone in a Building, or a tall Cedar, falls.

Reasons: 1. Evil examples, in generall, are marvelous prevalent with corrupt nature, even as Leaven, or as a gangrene, in the Body; but, especially those of Teachers, partly, through admiration of their persons; partly, through ignorance, or forgetfulness, rather, than those who know most, sometimes practise the least; and partly, through a fond opinion, that their Leaders shall excuse them.

Use.

Now, this should be an admonition to us, in place of Teaching to take heed to our selves, as well as unto Learning, 1 Tim. 4. 16.

So also you, the people, are here admonished of sundry duties. 1. As the Lord hath laid this charge on every of you, to pray, that the Gospell may have free passage, 2 Thes. 3. 1. So, especially, to pray for this; that it would please God, as, to give gifts of knowledg, so especially of Sanctification, unto your Ministers, men, as your selves, compassed about with many infirmities, and whom Satan especially labours to winnow, and sift to the very bottome; and what should many Reasons need? We see from our wofull experience, what impediments to the proceedings of the Gospell, the ungracious behaviours of lewd Ministers are: Pray therefore for us. 2. The powerfull effect of good life.

Use 2.

b Rev. 1. 6.

And, as this duty is to be performed by you, in behalf of Ministers: So especially your selves, whom the Lord hath made <sup>b</sup> Priests, and Prophets to your family; learn you hence, of all the rest, to be most wary in your carriage; Such Master, such Man; such Father, such Son, commonly seen in experience: And mark, if ye will, how the least of your Infants crept out of the cradle, like Apes, can imitate the Speeches, Actions, Gestures, especially, of Parents; and, if nothing else, yet let this restrain. Excellent

lent, is the benefit of it; wofull the issues of the contrary.

Thirdly, sith this so; you are taught to arme your selves, here-against; our Saviour hath made us wary against such misleadings, *Mat. 23. 3.* where speaking of Scribes, and Pharisees, he thus admonisheth; do as they say, while they speak out of *Moses Chair*: And, every of you, labour for so much knowledg of the word of God, that you may be able to judge, when they teach truth, when fallhood; when they do well, when ill; See *Joh. 10. 27.* The sheep of Christ heare his voice, know not a stranger. Hence know, that, in imitation, Christ sets us our limits, *1 Cor. 11. 1.* and, withall consider, that fellows in sinning, are fellows in punishment, *Riv. 18. 4.* and, lastly, beware of too much admiring the persons of men; for, how much this prevails to Heresie and impiety, wofull experience teacheth.

*Ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi.*] Here we have expressed the reason of Gods Commination, or threatening; partly, because the Lord had entred a Covenant with *Levi*; and partly, because they degenerated from the good example of their Predecessours, and so declined from the right way. The *Proasis* of this dissimilitude explains the life of their Fore-fathers, *ver. 5, 6, 7.* The *Apodosis*, the aberration of the Posterity, *ver. 8.* *Levi* walked with God, in truth, and equity; These turned out of the way; he turned many from iniquity; these caused many to fall, or to sin against the Law; He, according to the Covenant, feared God; These brake the Covenant of *Levi*,

From the body of the Text, we have two things worthy our observation: 1. Degenerating from the holy examples of Predecessors, is a sin hainous in the sight of God. When the Lord shall, in his mercy, vouchsafe us holy patterns, and we are not by them moved to walk in their steps, this that the Lord hates. Therefore, mark, how conditionally

Use 3.

Obsero.



onally he promiseth *Solomon* a blessing; if he will walk before him, as *David* his father walked, in pureness of his heart, and righteousness, *1 King. 9. 4. 5.* &c. *Cap. 11. 4. 6.* This noted as his blemish, that he was not, as *David* his Father; and, *1 King. 14. 8.* The Lord reproves *Jeroboam* for this, that he had not been as his servant *David*: yea, in many places, where worthy commendations of many Kings are recorded, yet this is added as a blemish, they did not as *David*, and other their Fathers.

And, this may not seem strange, in as much as even amongst men, rightly judging, this is a thing odious, to degenerate from our Lineage, and Predecessors; but, in Religion much more. The Reason is, because the Lord hath, by so many Precepts, urged this duty upon us, To imitate and follow the steps of our Forefathers, when they walked after Gods Commandement; *Rom. 4.* Walk in the steps of your father *Abraham*.

Or, 2. If we consider, how, by their example especially, the Lord effectually teacheth us, and gives them as guides unto us, in the waies of piety, and obedience: How powerfull examples are, chiefly, of Parents, we see in common experience. And, though God be mercifull, in teaching by his word; yet this may not be esteemed a small blessing, that it pleaseth him to give us guides, to go before us, *Jam. 5. 10.* *Heb. 11. & 12. 1.* As, in a journey, it is somewhat comfortable, to have the way pointed out unto us; but more comfortable, to see another more skilfull, conducting us; and, if a man will then erre, his errour must needs be wilfull; even so, &c. Besides this, this degenerating is a blemish, and dishonour to the name of Parents.

*Use.*

Let us now apply this, Generally, and Particularly; so as to be admonished thereby, to take heed of degenerating from the holy Patterns, that our Fore-fathers have set us.

Beloved in Christ; God hath dealt graciously with us,  
in

in this Kingdom, in this kind; chalking out the way to Heaven, in the example of our Fore-fathers; so as, except we will shut our eyes, we cannot but behold the beaten track that leads to his Kingdom; how hainous shall declinings, and degenerations be in us;

I will single out but a few of their worthy examples: 1. Their love of Gods truth manifested, especially, in these three particulars: First, their fervent desires to be hearers of it; as, whosoever shall read the histories of our Church, he cannot but acknowledg; as, 1 Sam. 3. 1. The word of God was precious in those daies, when there was no manifest vision; how frequent was it with them, then, to ride many a skore miles to heare a Sermon, setting apart all worldly employments! But, alas! How are our people degenerated, in this kind! To whom when the Lord comes home, even in every of our particular Congregations; yet audience not vouchsafed,

Again, How dear was the word of God unto them, when, for it, and to maintain it, in purity, how many of them laid down their lives, and shed their blood! Read the histories of our Martyrs, set out for this end; and, you shall see how many, of all sorts, and conditions, the Lord then crowned with Martyrdom, and with what constancy they embraced the extremest torments, for Christs sake.

But behold, degenerate children! How do we flinch even at the least verball persecution, if it be but a scoff, and what they counted their glory, and that justly, we now count our shame; to be professors of the Gospell. Besides, in education of Children, and in straight charging of them, to maintain the truth, which they sealed with their blood, how forward were they? O we slow-backs, in this necessary duty!

Time would faile me, to speak of their temperance, the just condemnation of our gluttonous times; their peaceableness, condemning our jangling; their hospitality,

con-

condemning our niggardly living to our selves: These things we can, oft, talk of; Lord! that we did make conscience, to walk, and to tread in their steps; we wonder, as *Solomon*, *Ecc. 7. 10.* Why it is, that former daies were better, than these; though we enquire not wisely of these things, when our manners are so far worse than theirs.

More particularly; I doubt not but many of us can say, and that truly, that God hath given us our own immediate Parents, Patterns of many excellent graces, Gravity, Piety, love of Religion, Bountifulness, &c. shall it not be our sin, and shame, to degenerate, and disgrace our families? What greater shame can there be, than for the Son to talk of his Fathers Religion, himself living as an Atheist? Of his Fathers bounty, himself a niggard? Of his Fathers zeale, himself a luke-warme Monster?

Now, surely, as these sins are odious in whomsoever; So most odious in those, who have had so worthy Patterns, as examples, to go before them. To conclude this point, as *Esay*, in another case, *Cap. 51. 2.* Consider *Abraham* your Father, and *Sarah* that bare you; Consider every of us, and call to mind their commendable parts; Surely, of all things, the Lord most hates degenerating Children.

*Obsero.*

In the second place, we may hence well observe; That the piety of the Parent shall not privilege the degenerating Child from the wrath of God; but yet threatned as a judgment for swerving from their fathers footsteps: In *Ezekiel*, *Cap. 18. 20.* The Lord purposely teacheth thus much: when the unthankfull Jews began to justify themselves, and condemn the Lord of injustice, for their affliction, as if they had smarted for their Fathers sins, only; The Lord protesteth, that the Son shall not dye for the Fathers sin; nor, on the contrary, a degenerate Child shall not live, by his Fathers righteousness, except he walk in his fathers steps: And, this that the Scripture affirms, *Hab. 2. 4.* *The just shall live by his (own) faith.*

Object.

Object. If any shall say, That the Lord hath somewhere protested ; That, for *David's* sake, he would spare, as *Solomon*, *Rehoboam*, &c. 1 *King*. 11. 12. Answer, It is true; that it pleaseth the Lord, remembering the righteous dealing of Fore-fathers, sometimes to bestow outward mercies upon degenerating Children : But then, these are not to them, in the nature of blessings ; such an one may have wealth, but to his hurt, as *Solomon* speaks : *Riches reserved to the hurt of the owners thereof*. 2. Not the Child, but the Parent in them, crowned.

And, this should teach us, not to trust, or vainly to put confidence in the righteousness, and obedience of our fore-fathers ; as if we, for that, should escape the Lords wrath: yet this, Beloved, is the conceit of many ungracious children, that love to be telling of their forefathers piety, and love, and zeal ; and how many descents Religion hath continued in their families, what their Fathers suffered for the truth ; &c. And this is, indeed, a Blessing if men know how aright to use it : Its a Blessing, when the Lord permits a man a Religious Parent, as above ; but, shall we, therefore, thinke, that we are priviledged from Gods wrath, being degenerate ? nay rather, not much more laid open to his fierce indignation, because of our declinings ? was thy father Religious ? Thou an Atheist ? Heavy is thy Condemnation : Thy father frugal, Hospitable ? &c. Thou a spend-thrift ? Woe worth the time, that ever thou wert born of so righteous Parents, whose steps thou refusest to follow, and walk in !

Object. Promise made to parents and seed. *Ans* w Rom. 9. 8. To the seed that are such, by Imitation, conditionally, so that they Imitate, and tread in their fathers Righteous steps ; As well, as to the seed, who are such only, by naturall Descent.

## VER. 9.

*Therefore, have I also made you contemptible, and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my wayes, but have been partiall in the law.*

*Observ.*

**F**ollows now the punishment of this their sin ; I have made you contemptible , &c. Wherein two things.  
1. The punishment. 2. The cause of it.

Where, first, observe we, That base estimation amongst the people, is a punishment : even this, to be vilely esteemed, and disregarded amongst men, is a punishment ; See *vers. 3. cap. 2.* And surely, if good Name, and Reverence, be a Blessing, then is Contempt , a Punishment.

**Object.** If any shall say, that this befell Christ, *Psal. 22. A Worme , and no man.* *Ans.* This a part of his humiliation, *Phil. 2.*

**Object.** The Lot of the Apostles, *1 Cor. 4. 9.* *Ans.* With the wicked only, for otherwise, their feet are beautiful, *Rom. 10. 15. 2.* Even they also have Sins to be chastened ; and this must be acknowledged, as a part of the Curse. *Deut. 28. 37.*

*Use*

This should teach us Humiliation , under the mighty hand of God, for our many abasures, we are subject unto : there is no blemish in good Name, but comes for sin ; and, he hath promised to Honour those , that Honour Him. Its true, that the Lord turns these things unto the Best, unto his Children, and brings good out of them, unto those that are his. *As , 1.* It seems to purge from Ambition, and desire of vain-glory , a great hinderance of sincerity, *Ioh. 12. 43.* 2. It works in us a care to approve our selves the more to God, that we may be glorious in his eyes. 3. It makes us more dye to the world : But yet, it's, in its own Nature , a Punishment , and many times, to Gods own children, a chastisement.

*There-*



*Therefore.* ] The cause followeth ; whence we observe ; That vicious life breeds vileness of estimation ; this calls the *salt of the earth* to the dunghill ; *Luke 14. 34. 35.* and, as its the Lord promise, to Honour those that honour Him ; so, they that despise him, shall be despised, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* How did the Lord honour *David*, in time of his *uprightness* ? How did that *dog Shimei* presume to raile at him, when he had defiled himself ? *2 Sam. 16.* yea, and how did his own Son faile, in duty towards him ?

So then, let us all heretake notice of the true cause of that vile esteeme, wherein, at this day, many live ; I speake of all sorts of men : Its a common, and most just complaint, that many have in their mouths ; How much the dignity of the Ministry, is, in these dayes, decayed ; contrary to that Reverence given by *Cornelius* unto *Peter* : And, to what cause, think you, do they impute it ? Some, to lack of Authority ; Some, to our poverty ; Some, to decay of Auricular Confession : But, these not the maine Causes : Apostles were never Confessours, yet highly esteemed ; never abounded with wealth, yet revered ; *John Baptists* rochet was of haire-cloath, yet revered by *Herod* himself. But, this is that which hath exposed us to contempt, namely, the lewd life of many, in place of ministers. The like of Magistrates ; the like of Fathers ; the like of the Aged ; Children presume against the Ancients ; and no marvell, when old age is not found in the way of righteousness. *1 Tim. 4. 12.* *Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou, then, unto them that believe, a pattern in good works.*

See we here, where a man must begin to lay the ground of Reverence, and Reputation, namely, in an holy life : Live holily, then shalt thou live honourably ; if not amongst the wicked, yet amongst Gods Children, *who honour such as feare the Lord, Psal. 15. 4.* While *Adam* stood in innocency, the savage beaſts did him Reverence ; when he

Use 1.

Use 2.

threw off obedience, they began to Rebell; *John Baptist* feared of *Herod*, because he knew him to be a *just man*; *Mat. 6. 2.*

If a punishment, to be vilely esteemed: then, a Blessing, to be honoured, and justly well esteemed, especially for Ministers: *good name, a rich pearle, and loving favour above silver, and gold, Prov. 22. 1. Eccles. 7. 3.* How prevalent this is, for security; how many times did this restrain the fury of Iewes against our Saviour? The people held him, as a *Prophet*, *Mat. 21. 46.* Besides the good, that such may do, rather then others: True honour is that that is given by men, rightly judging of the graces of God.

*Use.*

Hence then collect, that its lawfull for a man, by good meanes, to seek honour, and good report from men; See *1 Tim. 4. 12. Let no man despise thy youth, & 1 Tim. 3. 7.* A testimony even from men *without*, is to be laboured for: And, here, that little regard of approving our selves to men, justly taxed; what men say, or think, they care not; yet, saith the Apostle, *Phil. 4. 8. If there be any vertue, if any praise, follow things of good report.*

Meanes. 1. To be an Honourer of God *1 Sam. 2. 30.* in all carriage, publique, or private. 2. To do the things that tend to good Report, rather then simply, to hunt after praise. 3. Not principally to ayme at praise; It is like your shadow, the more you run after it, the faster it runs from you.

*But have been Partiall in the law* ] A new reason of this judgment mentioned; partiality in the Law. This is propounded, *vers. 9.* 2. Confuted by a reason, a *communi principio*, and so from equality; This uttered in a Rhetoricall Dialogisme.

Partiality what it is.

See we the nature of this sin: Partiality is, when (without just cause) one is preferred before another, in matter of justice; this is commonly called *Acception of persons*; *preferring one before another*; See *1 Tim. 5. 21.*

Now,

Now, not every such preferring, is partiality ; For, there is a preferring of one before another, warrantable; therefore, its added, without just cause : causes of preferring, of two sorts ; just, unjust : Unjust, as *when a rich man is regarded, for his Riches ; a poor man, for his poverty ;* See *Deut. 1. 17. Exo 1. 23. 3. Levit. 19. 15.* Lastly, in matter of justice, as in punishment, or reward, in reproof, or forbearing reproof : So, in kindness, we may without partiality, preferre. 1. Our own before strangers, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* 2. *Household of faith*, before others, *Gal. 6. 10.* but, in matter of justice, no such thing to be done.

This pressed upon Magistrates, that they especially observe it, *Deut. 1. 19.* we have the example of God himself, *Rom. 2. 11. 1 Pet 1. 17.* They are Gods, *Psal. 82. 6.* nor may inferior officers goe unpresse herein.

To ministers urged, with a strait charge, *1 Tim. 5. 21.* However, it be imputation to my self. To people, *Jam. 2. 1.* sundry reasons. 1. God chuseth. 2. Rich in faith. 3. Heys of the kingdome. 4. A breach of Gods Law. 5. A cause of *murmuring*, *Act. 6. 1.*

Use.

## VER. 10.

*Have we not all one Father ? Hath not one God created us ? why do we deal treacherously every man against his Brothers by profaning the Covenant of our Fathers ?*

**H**ere is set down the Confutation : One common principall of all men ; *Adam*, our common father; *Eve*, our common mother ; God our common Creator; Christ our common Redeemer ; See *Eph. 4. 6.*

Observ.

This should teach us *unity* in judgment, and affection, *Eph. 4. 3.* It should abate pride, teach to avoid partiality in any thing ; and, would God, in all things, we could consider this ! it would be a bridle from many injuries, and injustice,

Use.

## VER. 11, 12.

*Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel, and Jerusalem : for, Judah hath profaned the Holiness of the Lord, which he loved; and hath married the daughter of a strange God : The Lord will cut off the man that doth this : the Master, and the Scholler, out of the Tabernacles of Jacob; and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of Hostes, &c.*

**A** Transition from the sins of the Priests, to those of the people; These are two; both about Marriage.  
1. Unequall yoking themselves. 2. Disloyalty, *vers.* 14, 15, 16, 17.

In the first, we are to consider, 1. The sin. 2. The hainousness of it. 3. The punishment. 4. The amplifications, by frequency, and by Effects.

*Observ.*

A hainous sin, for a Child of God to couple himself in marriage, with a woman of contrary Religion, with an Idolater; See here, how it is called a transgression, an abomination, a defiling of the Lords Holiness.

Reasons: 2 Cor. 6. 14. *No communion betwixt light and darkness*; if none at all, then not the nearest; Reasons: 1. An unequall yoke. 2. The contrary nature of both. 2. The speciall commandment of God this way. *Exod. 34. Deut. 7. 2* with Reasons. 1. Of corruption, that may ensue: and, lest any presume, in respect of graces received. 1. No protection out of Gods wayes; as appeares by *Solomons* example; none like him, beloved of God, yet *Neh. 13. 26*. *strange women caused him to sin*; See also *Gen. 6. Num. 25. 1 King. 11. Ezr. 9. 10*. Where we reade of the judgment of God upon such. 2. 1 Cor. 7. 39. The injunction is, to marry, *only in the Lord*. 3. 2 Joh. ver. 10. Not so much as God-speed, to heretiques, men of contrary Religion; much less marriage

riage. 4. Great inconveniency; as grieve to the godly parents, *Gen. 26. 35. & 27. 36.* 5. Care of the contrary commanded, in *Abraham, Gen. 24.* in *Isaac, Gen. 28.* 6. Duties hindered, yea such as belong to the main end of marriage, namely, Education in the Information of the Lord, *Eph. 6.* 7. Corruption of manners, in *Solomon, 1 King. 11.* in *Achab*, this given as a reason of all his wickedness, *Iezabel* his wife provoked him, *1 King 21. 25.* and, of *Iehoram*, that he walked in the way of the house of *Achab*; the reason given, he was son-in-law to the house of *Achab*, *2 King. 8. 27.* 8. Such an one forced to see, and heare, what cannot but grieve the Spirit of God.

*Ob. Ioseph* married the daughter of *Potiphar*; *Moses* of *Iethro*?

*Ans.* Examples are no rules, when they swerve from Gods Commandements. 2. Its likely, they received a promise, and saw likelihood of conversion, *Dent. 21.* After ceremonies observed, they might: as, *strangers might not eat the passover, Exod. 12.* Yet, if any would submit himself, and become a member of *Israel*; after such incorporation, warrantable.

*Ob. Paul* permits Cohabitation. *1 Cor. 7. 13.*

*Ans.* Case not the same; marriage once entred, cohabitation may be continued, so long as hope; but not therefore to be entred, when we may chuse.

Now, Brethren, here is reprov'd the common sin of these times, wherein wealth, or beauty swayes all, in matter of marriage: What portion? What friends? all the enquiry; never, what Religion, or, what graces of God? And this, I would it stay'd amongst worldlings, and were not to be found, even amongst the servants of God. Consider. 1. Perill of corruption. 2. Continuall grievances, that, if thou hast grace, thou must needs have. 3. Provocations to evill, as in *Achab, 1 King. 21.* and, its common to all the wicked, *Prov.* 4. Disloyalty:

*Use.*



ty ; and, what marvell , if they be unfaithfull to Men that are unfaithfull to God ? 5. Many times, cursed posterity, as *Moab* of the daughters of *Heb.*

*Ob.* Now, no Infidels, or Idolaters.

*Ans.* Would God , that were so ! but. 1. Every profane, unreformed man, and woman, an Infidell ; for, *true faith purifyeth the heart, Aët. 15. 9.* 2. Idolatry is of two sorts ; in worship ; In manners. 3. Reasons the same:

*Quest.*

Whether such marriages are ratified , so as, without Adultery, they may be continued ?

*Ans.*

Some judg, no ; because God hath not coupled them ; and, *Ezr. 9. 10.* We see example, and precept of dismissal : Some otherwise ; that, though to enter them be sin ; yet, being entred, they may be continued, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* Reasons, they are sanctified unto us ; and, perhaps, in such case, God may use us, as means, to gain them.

Cautions. 1. Rash choyce to be bewailed, continually. 2. Infection, especially, to be taken heed of. 3. Children not permitted to their education. 4. Endeavour, by all good means, to reclayme them.

*Vers. 12. The Lord will cut off the man that doth this ]* That is, root out him, and his posterity : Where we note. 1. The punishment it self. 2. Extent of it. 3. Certainty.

*Observ.*

An heavy curse, to have posterity cut off ; See *1 King. 21.* threatened to *Achab*, and *David*, *Psal. 69. 25.* prayed for, upon the wicked , as a special plague. And surely, if this be a blessing, to have posterity continued, as *Psal. 128.* then, a curse, to have it cut off.

*Use.*

Now, beloved, take we notice of this plague upon many ; And, take we heed of the Causes of it. 1. One is, lewd, and ungracious marriage ; as here. 2. Adultery, See *Hos. 4. 10.* the adulterous brood prospers not. 3. Neglect of education, in the fear of God ; as, in *Eli's* sons. 4. Swearing, and oppression, *Zech. 5. 4, 5.* 5. Persecution

Persecution of Gods children, *Psal. 69. 25.* Davids prayer was, withall, a prophecy : And, let them lay sit to heart, whom it may concerne.

*The Master and the Scholler, out of the Tabernacles of the Lord* ] Namely, without respect of persons : So doth the Lord never respect how great, or how little, but, how righteous, or unrighteous ; for, with God there is no acception of persons : And therefore, let all take heed, how they provoke the eyes of the Lords glory to wrath ; God shall not spare thee, for thy poverty, &c.

*Observ.*

But, especially, note we here, how the Lord joyne together, in punishment, those that have any way, been conjoynd in transgression ; Master, and Servant, &c.

*Use.*

And, let this admonish especially servants, how they partake with their masters, in evill : How common this is, we see in many ; as in 2 *Sam. 10. & 11.* in *David* ; his servants, they are the panders, and the bawds ; And, a warrant they think, the commands of their Masters : But, Beloved, know, that the Lord is an avenger of all such things ; we may apply this Bribery, to vsury, &c.

Follows next the certainty ; so that very devotion it self shall not hinder.

*Observ.*

Whence we note ; how, that devotion ; without holy life, avails nothing to avert Gods judgments : *Isa. 1. 12, 15.* *Though yee make many prayers, I will not heare, for your hands are full of blood ;* *Isa. 66. 3.* The Lord saith to Hypocrites, their sacrifices were *abominations* ; 1 *Sam. 15. 22.* *Saul* ; in his kinde, seemingly, and pretensively devout ; yet hath his kingdome rent from him, for disobedience ; and the Lord, in generall, protesteth, he more esteemes mercy, then Sacrifice ; See also *Isai. 57. & Iam. 4.*

Let all then, that call upon the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity, 2 *Tim. 2. 19.* and *Iam. 4. 8.* Draw neer to God, but first cleanse your hearts, and purge your hands : Beloved, its strange to see, how many wonder,

and begin to finde fault with the Lord, that he regards not there prayers ; as *Isa. 58. 3.* *They fasted, but God regarded not* ; the Reason is at hand ; they do their own wills : Again, see here the cause, as *Iam. 4. 1, 2, 3.* why many devout in externall worship, yet are, for all that, subject to Gods just judgment ; heare, and profit not ; pray and receive not : Spirituall judgments, especially, are evident upon them ; wonder yee at this ? the cause is evident ; your sins seperate betwixt God, and you, and hinder good things from you : As the Lord speaks, *Mal. 3. 10.* amend your lives, then prove me with this ; *If I will not open the windows of Heaven* ; therefore, *Luk. 8. 15.* *An honest heart required.*

Its strange to see how men, like atheists, begin to cry out, its vain to serve God ; No, not so ; but, its in vain for a wicked man, continuing purpose to be wicked, to pray, or heare ; for, the condition of obedience, on their part, is not performed ; at most, no farther, then from the lip, *Isa. 29. 13.*

## VER. 13.

*And thus have ye done again, concerning the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, in so much that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.*

**F**ollowes the amplification ; this have ye done again ; as if he had said, not enough to have once done it, ye repeat it.

*Observ.*

Iterating of sins, hainous in the sight of God ; See *Exra 9. & 10.* its hated by us, in our own very children, and servants : Therefore this mark, Gods Children have not been noted, to have fallen twise, in the same kinde, except in matters of smaller weight ; I mean, after once brought to see their sin, by affliction, or other meanes :  
few,

few, or none examples of iteration, shall be found; of *Abraham* concealing the truth we read, that it was done twice; but, of great, and gross sins, we read it seldome: Indeed, of *Lor*, and *Solemon*, we read they fell oftner; but mark, their acts were, as it were, continued acts; and in the interim, little or no remorse, or chastisement; but, after once scourging, you shall not (I take it) finde, that they turned to their old sins.

Now then, let us be admonished to take heed of these sins; or the Iterating of any sin whatsoever: Its a grievous thing, to fall into the hands of God, and, by one sin, to provoke him; but to fall again, that is discomfortable; once, drunkenness, or whoredome; &c. fearfull; but, once warned, to fall again, marvellous discomfortable: I do not exclude such men, from hope of pardon; for, I know, the Lord is much in sparing; and he that will have us to forgive seventy times seven, he (no doubt) hath mercy in store, upon repentance renewed: But, repentance in such cases, hardly attained; and admonitions contemned cause, that the Lord withholds; and permits to wallowing many times.

And, therefore, Let this be mine admonition to all those, that have been, in any one sin, overtaken: Hast thou sinned? and hath the Lord had mercy on thee? Remember who said; *Joh. 5. 14. sin no more; lest a worse thing happen unto thee*; the last error worse then the first, conscience deeperly wounded, Gods favourable Countenance more estranged: And, for this cause, we must be exhorted. 1. After such falls, seriously, and heartily to repent, not to content ourselves with superficiall cures, but to have the wound searched to the bottom. As it fares in the body, so in the soul; a wound superficially only cured, the rottenness still remaining within breaks out again, and the cause is evident; so, in spirituall diseases, ordinary; this the cause we see many fall again into the same sins. 2. But, specially, keep watch over that

Use

affection, or that occasion, that was occasion to betray us; surely, as the divell ceaseth not, every where, to assault us; so especially, he there gives the onser, where he hath once prevailed, and there specially hopes for success; If thou hast fallen, once, by lust, look again to be assaulted there; and therefore, there-against specially arme thy self. 3. Labour especially to shun all occasions of that sin, and come not neere any of those meanes, that have entangled thee; if company, beware it: if idleness, beware it: the burnt child dreads the fire, let it be true of thee. 4. Labour especially to forget the pleasures of that sin. 5. Be not behinde in any measure of humiliation, publique, or private.

*Observ.*

*Covering the altar of the Lord with teares, with weeping, and with crying out, &c.* ] The thing we may here observe is, how even the wicked are sometimes grieved at the testimonies of Gods displeasure, especially in rejecting their services from his acceptance: One speciall instance we have, *Gen. 4.* How doth *Cain* go drooping, and hange the head? when he sees the Lord give testimony of accepting his brothers, rejecting his own Sacrifice, *vers. 5.* and *Isa. 58. 3.* The Hypocrites are brought in reasoning the case with the Lord, why he should not respect their fasting: And, *Heb. 12. 17.* and *Gen. 17.* As lightly as *Esaú* esteemed of that favour of God, in his primogeniture; yet when he sees himself deprived of the blessing; how weepes he, and howls to think of it?

This one Reason of it, there seems to me to be; namely, because there is not the wickedest man that lives, but knows, and thinks this, that the top of blessednes consists in Gods favour, and the testimonies thereof: *Balaam*, as vile a wretch as he was, he could wish to dye the death of the righteous, when he had seen the blessednes that God had provided to bestow upon his Church, *Num. 23. 10.* And, I am perswaded, howsoever we have many at this day, that like Atheists mock at the counsell of the poor, because  
he



he makes God his hope, *Psal. 14. 6.* Yet, he wisheth from his heart, he were as many of them be; so well acquainted with Gods will, so sensibly favoured of the Lord, and so highly assured of his love: All the world for a good conscience, in extremity.

Now, hence it follows, that (every) grief for the loss of Gods favour, is no token of a childe of God; because, even wicked men may have it; a very cast-away may bewaile the loss of Gods favour, as *Esau* did; he may be discontented at the Lords testifying his displeasure, as *Cain*; and therefore, let no man thus conclude; It grieves me to think, that the Lord favours me not, therefore, I am a Child of God.

And yet, its true, there is a kinde of grieving for the testimonies of Gods dis-favour, that is a true note of a Child of God; and therefore, let us examine it.

Signes of that grieving for the lack of Gods favour, that, is a note of a childe of God, are. 1. A Childe of God, that is indeed sorrowfull for the loss of Gods favour; he is never at quiet, till he have recovered the sensible tokens of it; as, *Psal. 32.* When *David* had offended the Lord by those his fearfull sins, see how he professeth of himself, that he found no quiet in himself, till he had recovered it; conferr *Iob 33.* Sleep, and all things, are unpleasant to him: with a wicked man, its not so ordinary; though, perhaps, it may disquiet him some time, yet the storme is soon blown over; and, you shall see, such is the like esteeme of it, that, as they speak, it shall never break their sleep; they will never eate, or drink lesse, &c. By this try thy self. 2. Confession of sins, as the cause of it, *Psal. 32. 5.* And, they will be the first, who will accuse themselves, and acknowledg, that its just with God, thus to plague them; with a wicked man, not so. 3. A desire to remove all things, that may offend, and continue the Lords displeasure; as *Iosh. 7.* When it pleaseth the Lord, to manifest his displeasure, against *Israel*,

Use

for their sin, and the Lord hath made known the cause of it; *Iosbua* presently goes about the removall: Thus is it, with all Gods Children, and nothing so dear, but they part with, to recover his love: Not so, with a wicked man: gladly, would he have Gods favour; but doth nothing to procure it; if they may have his favour, together with the pleasures, and profits of their sins, they are contented; if otherwise, rather then lose their pleasures, farewell Gods favour. 4. Instant prayer, and that, without ceasing, as in *David*, &c. Not so with a wicked man; *hypocrites in heart encreaseth the wrath, for they call not, when the Lord binds them*, *Iob* 36. 13. 5. Bitter complaint, under that sad condition, as, *Psal.* 42. & 84. and *Psal.* 74. 9. 10. Bewailing also, and bemoaning themselves to every one, that they think may do them ease. 6. The means to recover it, by diligence in Gods service, are never slackted, but rather encreased by it: In those times, above all, most diligent to seek God, *Hos.* 5. 15. With a wicked man, not so; but, presently, slackes he his devotion; as those wretches, *Mal.* 3. 14. Cry presently, *its in vain to serve God, and what profit is it?* &c. 7. A Child of God resolves, even in the middelt of feeling Gods displeasure, still to continue his service, what ever becomes of him; *Iob* 13. 15. 16. *Though he kill me, I will trust in him, and never forsake him, he shall be my salvation*: With an Hypocrite, and wicked man, its not so; if the Lord be not, presently, mercifull again, and at their beck; presently, they renounce him; as, *1 Sam.* 28. 6. 7. *When the Lord answered not Saul, by dreames, &c.* presently, he flies off to a witch: And, would God, this were not too evident amongst our people! So long as any thing can be gained by Religion, and the current of the times runs that way, who but they? But, if the Lord justly be displeased, for hypocrisie, so that, they feel him not so gracious, as in times past; or perceive, that he answers not presently to their call, they then forsake, and renounce him. 8. A wicked mans griefe

at the loss of Gods favour, it works envy, and hatred against those, to whom the Lord shewes most tokens of his love; as *Gen* 4. compared with *1 Iob* 3. 12. so, in *Saul*, *1 Sam* 18. 6, 7, 12, 28, 29. With a childe of God, its not so : That love of a childe of God, is a permanent grace, *1 Iob* 3. 14. And, though they could wish to themselves, the happiness of other of Gods children; yet envy they not thereat, but ever magnifie the grace of God to them shewen.

Is this so ? Is this a thing that even wicked men grieve at ? That the Lord rejects their services ? Then learn thou, for ever to acknowledg Gods favour to thee in this, when he shall give thee testimonies, and evidences thereof: And, beloved, this grace of prizing aright the favour of God, and the tokens thereof, is an excellent grace; and the lack of it causeth so much misery to the dear children of God. Doth God hear thy prayers ? Rejoyce in it, as in the greatest happiness in the world ; doth he bless thy hearing ? and, art thou bettered in knowledg, and obedience ? Bless God for it ; and forget not this loving-kindness of the Lord unto thy soul.

And, for this end, gather as many testimonies of them, as possibly thou canst.

What are the signs of it ?

Falſe signs, outward prosperity, with the common appendices thereof ; but against this, see *Eccles* 9 1. because they come not into misfortune, as others ; therefore, they applaud themselves in their evil.

Notes of Gods respecting our services, are, 1. Extraordinary ; such was that same sending down of fire from heaven, *1 King* 18. and, *2 Chron* 7. 1. but thus, the Lord deals not, at this day. Yet, its true, there are certain sensible tokens of Gods accepting us, and our services, at this day ; which Gods children may take and esteem, as pledges of his love. 1. Success in all things that thou puttst thine hand unto : but here, lest I be mistaken, understand,

*Use. 2.*

derstand by success, not that which the world so esteems, a flourishing, and prosperous estate; but this call thou success, *when all things work to thy good*, Rom. 8. 28. To thy true good, furthering thee, in the salvation of thy soul; or when outward prosperity makes the full of good works; and, fearfull is the estate of those, to whom these things work evill; when prosperity puffs up the heart; or, when afflictions amend not, when hearing betters not, &c. Fear then, lest the Lord be angry with thee. 2. When the Lord shall bless thee, *in spirituall things, in Christ Jesus*, Eph. 1. 3. That is, when thou shalt feel this fruit of the service of God; that, thereby the graces of God be obtained, and encreased; that a token, that God accepts thy service. 3. Thou shalt perceive it, by that inward testimony, and certificate, that Gods Spirit gives to thee, in thy conscience: God deals not, now, with us, as he did with *Cornelius*, Act. 10. 3. To send an Angell from Heaven to tell us, that our prayers, and almes-deeds are accepted with God: but this he doth, he sends his Spirit into our hearts, that assures us, by the word of God, that our courses please him; these if thou feel, bless God for them; and, thus think, they are such, as even wicked men, sometimes, would redeem with the loss of all that they enjoy.

Use. 3.

Is this so? Then mark what a miserable case such men live in, as when the Lord gives many testimonies, that he rejects both them, and their services, yet are no whit moved therewith: Surely, they come not so neer Heaven, as *Cain*, and *Esau*; for, they grieved at this, which these wretches never do. As, how many are there, that can say, and saying, deride all Religion, that they could never perceive themselves to be any whit better for their prayers, &c. What, nothing the better? And, findest thou no feeling of Gods love therein? Wretched man that thou art! what comfort, then, canst thou have in thy wealth, pleasure, honour? &c.

Yea, if thou hadst all the world, what could it comfort thee?

thee ? But, how much more miserable their condition, that are the worse for it ? For example, when God, gives wealth, they are the worse ; when he sends afflictions, they are the more hardened: when he gives preaching, and they are the more blinded, as *Isa. 6. 10.* What a wretched case live such men in? except they should go down, presently, to hell, they could not be more miserable.

*Observ.*

*Inasmuch, that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will, at your hand ]* Hence note we, that during state of impenitency, no sacrifice, or service, is accepted with God, though performed with never so great devotion : See *Isa. 1. 12.* Sabbaths, and new-moons commanded, yet, in these people during impenitency, *most odious, and abominable ;* See also *Prov. 15. 8.*

Impenitency is of two sorts. 1. Generall 2. Particular : Generall impenitency is, when a man lives in a continuall course of sinning, without any conversion at all unto God; as, before calling, and turning, by the Spirit of God : Particular is that, which, after the first conversion, Gods children fall into ; as, they sometimes go astray, so, for a time, perhaps, they lye unhumbl'd in their sins ; as *David, 2 Sam. 12.* till *Nathan* comes to him. Will you hear Reasons of it ? One is, that extream hatred the Lord holds all sins in, especially, when they are thus lived in, *Hab. 1. 13.* Its true, that the Lord bears many sins, in his people, so long as they are bewailed, and striven against sparing us, even as a father spares his own son that serveth him. And, though there be, in the dearest children of God, abundance of iniquity, and corruption ; yet whilest they are striven against, the Lord sees them not, that is, he takes no notice of them, *Num. 23. 21.* *He seeth none iniquity in Jacob, nor transgression in Israel ;* But, when a man lives in his sins, (without repentance,) these sins, even the least of them, are most detestable unto him.

A second reason of it, is, because no obedience can be performed by such a man, in singleness of heart ; and, he



doth but dally with the Lord, and even mock him, who comes before him with such services; *Isai. 29. 13. This people, saith the Lord, draweth neer me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me*; Singleness of heart is that the Lord accepts.

A third Reason; because such performe not the conditions of acceptation; neither doth Christ, (during that state) mediate for such: Its one main condition the Lord requires in all that come neer him; that they be holy, even as he is holy, at least in affection, &c.

Use. 1.

This then shewes us the cause, why the Lord walks so stubbornly against us, notwithstanding, we seemed daily to seek him, as *Levit. 26. 31.* and, as he speaks, *Iosh. 7.* When *Ioshuah* complains unto God, for his wrath upon *Israel*; what shall I say, when *Israel* turns his back upon their adversaries? Its because of some detestable sin amongst us.

Use. 2.

Secondly, let it teach us all, with speed, and singleness of heart, to turn to our God, that our services may finde acceptance with him; upon this ground, the prophet *Isaiah* chap. 1. 18. Exhorts us; comfortably inviting us, then, *though sins be as skarlet, yet shall they be as white as wooll*; as on the other side, though services never so glittering, and glorious; prayers never so many, and fervent, all is to no purpose; *If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear me, Psal. 66. 18.* Yea, and let Gods children make use of it, in this kinde, for the comfort, and assurance of acceptance of their services, before the Lord.

Use. 3.

Thirdly, see here the miserable estate of men living impenitently in their sins; they glory perhaps in this, that they serve God earvely, as those hypocrites, *Isa. 58.* But alas! vain men, all they do, is unclean unto them; God heareth not sinners, *Ioh. 9. 31.* No drunkard, usurer &c. Impenitently such: and here, by the way, I might take notice, how many deceive themselves, with an opinion of repentance; some think the buyers speech, in *Solomon*, is repentance.

penitance, It is naught, It is naught ; and , would I could leave it ! fondly ; for, what is it, verbally , to dislike sin, and affectionately to practise it ?

Some cry God mercy, as fondly ; some mourning for sin, some confessing of sins, some forbearing the outward practice, when their hearts run after their covetousness ; some leaving off some sins. living in others ; *contra*, Ezek 18, 28. Consider sin, and turn from it.

## VER. 14.

*Yet ye say, Wherefore ? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee, and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously ; yet is shee thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

**Y**et ye say, *Wherefore ?* ] So willing is wickedness to defend it self ; so hardly brought to serious confessing, and hearty detesting iniquity : wherein ? They would fain still seem innocent, and guiltless : Job puts from him this sin, Job 21. 33. and, withal expreth the fashion of wicked ones, and the cause of it ; if I have hid my sin, as *Adam*, concealing mine iniquity in my bosome, &c. So *Adam*, and *Eve* ; so *Cain*, &c.

And, in this, how right shew we our selves the Posterity of old *Adam*, colouring, and shifting, and excusing our sins, even then, when the Lord, by his judgments, findes them out. Now brethren, let us be admonished to take heed of this, and to root out of our hearts this corruption, so natural, so usual in us. The just man is the Accuser of himself : And for this cause, good for us, to consider, what a God the Lord is, with whom we have to deal, such an one, as is about our beds, and to whose eyes all things are naked, and uncovered. Secondly, labour to acquaint thy self with thine own deceitful heart ; and bring sin out of its lurking holes. And thirdly, consider the benefit of open

Observ.

Use.

and free confessing sin, accusing and condemning thy self ; See Psal. 31. 5.

*Because the Lord hath been a witness between thee, and the wife of thy youth, &c.* Here followeth the second sin, laid to their charge, a second violation of the marriage-bed, in polygamy, or multiplying of many wives, through liberty of divorce : where. 1. The sin is propounded, in general. 2. Reproved. 3. Confuted. 4. Amplified.

The general propounding of the sin, is vers. 14. amplified by a *prolepsis* ; that, howsoever they had so carried the matter, as they thought, that none could justly detect them of lust, or cruelty, in this manner of putting away the old, and, and marrying a new ; yet the Lord was witness between them. The reproof is vers. 14. *she is thy companion* ; and therefore, ought not to be thus sinned against. The confutation. 1. She is the *wife of thy covenant*, that is, she, with whom thou enterest covenant, and that before God, Pro. 2. 17. therefore ought not to be thus despised. 2. From the ordinance of God, and his first Institution ; He made one, and but one to be joyned unto one : amplified, though he had abundance of Spirit, could have made more, yet made but one. 3. By the end ; because he sought a godly seed, as if he had said, what ever is born otherwise, is not the seed of God, but of the devil. 4. The amplification : God hates dissimulation, yet they did it, under pretence, and colour of *Moses law*, *as the Lord is witness*]

*Observe.*

*The Lord is witness*]. So then we have God a witness of our secretest sins, most privately committed, most colourably covered ; See Mal. 3. 5.

In this testimony, or witnesship of the Lord, are three things. 1. Knowledge, and this is every where given unto God, Psal. 139. and, 50. 21. 2. Record, registering our sins, as, Mal. 3. 16. *A book of remembrance written for those that feare God* ; so, the Lord is said, *and spauca dōs,*

to

to have a book of record, and to keep a register of all our sins, little, and great, Rev. 20. 12. Jer. 44. 21. *did not the Lord remember?* 3. Evidence; giving evidence to the face of all sinners of their transgressions.

Now, what should we learn hence? Surely, not to sin, in hope to be hid; for, though man cannot testify, yet the Lord is both witness, and judg. against transgressors, Psal. 94. 7. The wicked; Psal. 10. 11. are brought in thus speaking. *The Lord shall not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard:* but mark, how David reasons against this phancy; God made the eye, the ear, &c. teacheth man knowledge; and, *Causa* is not, *to be general, darent efficitur suo.* Yet this how evident a cause of many sins amongst us! Job 5. *The adulteress waits for the twilight,* as who say, darkness were a mantle to cover us: hypocrites these are, who dig deep to hide their counsails from the Lord, Mat. 23. 15. and the vizor of hypocrisie, and dissimulation, shall hide them from the eyes of the Lord. But, I wish, that we had this alwayes in minde, that the Lord is witness, one that takes notice of, records, and will give evidence against us, for our coloured and privy sins; no doubt, it would restrain us from many of them.

Give leave to evidence this point. The first reason is taken from the omnipresence of God; that is *Totus ubique*, Psal. 139. He that is every where, is in the dark, in the chamber, in the bed, in the heart, so is God. *Ab effectis*, he gives sight, hearing, knowledg, &c. therefore, no doubt, himself is such. 2. He makes the heart, therefore no doubt, knows it. 3. Consider but the nature of the word of God; how it rips up the secretest corruptions of a mans heart, 1. Cor. 14. 25. & Heb. 4. 12, 13. Conscience testifieth, and accuseth, Rom. 2. 15. 1. Joh. 3. 20. *God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.*

Come we now to the sin it self: It was polygamy, and multiplying of wives; an hainous sin; crossing. 1. Gods ordinance, in creation, as here, vers. 1. 2. The end of marriage;

Use.

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Polygamy  
what it is.

marriage; commonly, a cursed generation, as in Ishmael.  
3. Diminishing comforts, by breeding heart-burnings  
*Gen.* 4. 4. Forbidden unto Kings, *Deut.* 17. 17.

See we then a little what it is. It is, when a man, or woman, couples himself, or her self, in marriage to more, than one; this is Polygamy; in this was tainted *Abraham, David, Solomon*. The first authour of it was *Lamech*, noted for a wicked, and profane man.

Here then, we may see what to judge of that Polygamy of the Fathers, in ancient time; namely, that it was a breach of the first institution of marriage, and a thing contrary to the law of God.

Now, whether a sin in them, or, a thing done by dispensation, and priviledg, Divines differ. Some think, it was their priviledg; and they give these Reasons. 1. The holiness of those men, that used it; but, even these holy ones are noted for their falls; as *Abraham, David, Solomon*. 2. Not reprov'd, by the Prophets.

*Ans.* Though not particularly, yet in the generall; and, here, in this place, by name, and particularly reprov'd.

3. No speciall repentance recorded.

*Ans.* Perhaps, commoners made them swallow it up, without particular repentance; yet thus *David, Psal.* 19. 12. Prayes for pardon of secret, that is, of unknown sins, unknown he meanes, to himself.

4. *Sarah* gave *Abraham* *Hagar*.

Observ.

*Ans.* Through infirmity, and desire to partake in the blessing of the promised seed. 2. In civill contract.

And therefore hence may we see rather, as in a glass, a pattern of humane frailty, when it pleaseth God to permit us to our selves. And, let this teach us, not to be the more wary, and watchfull over our selves, as *Paul* speaks, *1 Cor.* 10. 11. of Gods judgments upon sinners; we may say of the very sins of the dear Servants of God, they are written for our warning; And, howsoever wicked men otherwise



otherwise abuse them, and make them as patents, and warrants for like sins, yet let Gods Children learn otherwise to profit by them; as. 1. Learn hence the power of corruption; when as it prevails against men of greatest graces. 2. Pray God to stablish, by his free Spirit. 3. Beware of occasions.

Again, take heed, especially, of those meanes, by which they were drawn into these sins; the means seem to have been these. 1. The commonness of the sin, and the long custome of it; so long had it continued, and was grown so fashionable, that it seemed to be no sin: The like you shall see, at this day; but, sins; when they are grown into fashion, are swallowed up as no sins; drunkenness, a fearful sin; yet, I know not how, amongst drunken Dutch-men, seems no sin at all; would God, the same mischief were not too evident amongst us! But unto this, oppose we this one conclusion; that commonness, or custome, or antiquity, alters not the nature of any unlawful action: A thing forbidden, though never so common, never so ancient, and long continued, yet still staves in the nature of sin. Murther is still a crying sin, though it be ancient, almost as the world, as in *Cain*. And, that plea of others so doing, (Thus did our fathers, that were before us,) is nothing in the sight of God. A second occasion of it, was, a preposterous, and over-hasty desire to have the promises of God accomplished; so, it's thought, the Fathers were drawn to Polygamy. A promise they had, that the Messiah should be born of them; impatient in expectation of the blessing, they betook themselves to unlawfull meanes: *Rebecca* had received a promise of God, that *Jacob* the younger should be the Lord of his brother, and inherit the fathers blessing; she willing to accomplish this promise upon *Jacob*, she teacheth him dissembling, and lying, Gen. 27. But, to this let us oppose this conclusion. That the Lord, who will have his will and purpose accomplished, will have it accomplished, by warrantable means; and there-

Use.

therefore, fear thou, even to doe what God will have done, by any meanes, that he hath not sanctified. And, by faith, depend upon God, yea, though he seem long to stay, permitting unto him the dispensing of the times, and appointment of meanes, to bring his purpose to pass.

Now, the cause of this, in these Iewes, was, besides the examples of the Patriarkes, and long custome of the people, a colour that they had from the bill of divorce, permitted by *Moses*.

Of the nature  
of divorce

It shall not be amiss, therefore, a little to enquire, what we are to think, touching the matter of divorce. 1. What it is. 2. Whether lawfull. 3. The kinds.

Divorce, therefore, is, in generall, the dissolution of the marriage contract. Now, whether any divorce be lawfull, any breaking of the knot of wedlock? some think no; but, that the divorce spoken of, in Scripture, is nothing but separating from cohabitation; and that there can no sufficient cause be, of breaking the marriage-contract, rightly solemnized: indeed, some cases they put, wherein outward solemnities may be frustrate; as, when marriage is entred by parties, not permitted by the law of God; but, if entred betwixt parties meete, no possible dissolution. But, here-against we may oppose that sentence of our Saviour *Christ*, *Mat. 19. 8. 9.* in case of fornication: Reasons of it, these. 1. Because, this utterly breaks the marriage-bond, and is most directly opposite, and contrary thereto; besides, they must be one flesh. 2. By that law of the Lord, that would have the adulterer punished with death; wherein the collection is easy, that, after that fact, they are to be reputed, as dead; and the innocent party as free from that bond of marriage, as if the nocent were dead.

Of divorce are two sorts. 1. One lawfull. 2. The other unlawfull: lawfull divorce is that, that is made for lawfull causes: Now, hereabout is all the controversy. What are lawfull causes of divorce? Some have assigned many; as, 1. Infidelity; if a believer marry with an Infidell.

Infidell, that marriage is *ipso jure nullum*.

*Ans.* In the Jewes law, it was so, *Exod. 10.* The reason of it was, the will of God, utterly excluding such from fellowship with his people, till they had renounced their Idolatry, and were incorporated unto to the people of God; but, under the new Testament, not so; *1 Cor. 7.*

1. *The unbelieving wife sanctified to the believer, and hope there is of gaining.*

Secondly, grievous, and capital crimes; and thus they reason, if for adultery, which is the less; then why not for Idolatry, murder? &c.

*Ans.* It follows not; for understanding whereof, know we, that grievousness of sins, in this kinde, must be considered, especially, in respect of marriage it self. And, though it be true, that there are many sins, more grievous than adultery; yet none, that so much is contrary to marriage, as adultery.

Thirdly, sterility, or barrenness.

*Ans.* Not so; *Abraham*, and *Zachary*, keep their wives, though barren; it was their cross, and affliction, but, no warrant for divorce.

Madness, or danger of life.

*Ans.* Neither doth this break marriage. In such cases, holy means may be used, for avoiding the danger; but, no attempt of divorce permitted; perhaps, that which they call separation, *à thoro, & mensâ*; but none such, as whereby marriage should be utterly dissolved.

Lawful causes two only. 1. Adultery, *Matth. 19. & 5.*

2. Malitious desertion.

Unlawful divorce. when as for unlawful causes, the contract is dissolved, and a new entred: as, the Jewes for every cause: if but a blemish in the body, if any dislike for crooked manners, &c. Our Saviour deales against this, *Matth. 5 & 9.* His reasons against it, are these. 1. The Lords ordinance. 2. The nighness of conjunction. 3. The inferior cannot dispence with the inferiours authority.

4. Adultery incurred. 5. The Lord hates it, vers. 16.

*Moses permitted it.*

*Ansiv.* By assigning the cause, for safety of the wives.

2. By recalling to the original institution.

3. Corrupt the text; *Moses* commanded not, but permitted. Now beloved, this sin of such divorces is not indeed, rise amongst us, as amongst the Jews; but another, of like nature, every where rise: marriage of new not attempted, because not permitted; but, assuming of strumpets into the room of wives, every where seen. A horrible sin, and such as God every where, professeth to plague, and punish. And, let us all beware of it; surely, it's a sin, that devours to destruction; and, we know who hath said, *Whoremongers, and adulterers God will judge,* Heb. 13. 4.

*Yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant* ] The Epithets given to wives; called our companions: let us see then a little, what that society is, whereinto they enter, that are married. 1. Mutual interest one to anothers person, 1 Cor. 7. 4. Eph. 5. 31. One flesh. 2. Participation in that same *herile dominium*, as, Gen. 16. *Sarah* over *Hagar*, by *Abraham's* consent. 3. In use, and right over all things, that they have, &c. in testimony whereof, she is taken out of the side, not of the feet, to teach, how neer the conjunction is.

One caveat, by the way, though distastful to many; its such a fellowship, as must still stand with subjection, and acknowledgment of that power, that the Lord hath put in the husband over the wife. 1. From original Creation, 2. From Principality in the womans transgression, 1 Tim. 2. 13. 14. 3. Gifts of wisdom, and strength, not equal, 1 Pet. 3. 7. The weaker vessel; not ordinarily so well able to manage things as the husband; and, by conscience of infirmity, the Lord would teach them subjection, 1 Cor. 11. 10. She carries power on her head, that is, a sign,

sign, and testimony of her subjection.

All one flesh.

*Ans.* Union may be without equality; Christ and the Church one; yet must the Church be subject; body and soul one, yet soul commands; head and members one body, yet head, a Principality.

Reproved here that over-Lordly carriage of husbands towards their wives, and that usage of them, as drudges. The heathen Philosopher reprov'd this, in the *Barbarians*, and from the name would make the sin odious unto us; that held their wives in place of servants and drudges; yea more familiarity, many times, with servants then with wives; a great ataxy, and disorder in the family.

VER. 15.

*And did not he make one? yet had he the residue of the Spirit: and wherefore one? that he might seek a godly seed, &c.]*

**I**ntimating thus much. That adulterous posterity is not Gods seed; and the Lord hath ever set notes of dislike upon them. It was his will that a bastard should not enter into the congregation of God, to the tenth generation: and upon many of them may we see sensible tokens of Gods displeasure, as in *Ismael*: Howbeit, this is, withal, to be understood, that it was not Gods will, that such should, all, and every of them, be excluded from salvation: *Ismael* was circumcised, though not admitted to Priesthood, yet into the general covenant; and, an example we have in *Tephtha*, the son of an harlot, recorded amongst the faithful, Heb. 11. 32.

This an admonition unto such, on whom this infamy is fallen, in their birth; that they should, of all others, be most careful over themselves; and consider, and humble themselves for their fathers transgressions. And, secondly,

*Observ.*

*Use.*



ly, be our admonition, how we break the bond of wed-lock : the same use that the Prophet himself here makes hereof, in the clause of this text, saying, therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

## VER. 16.

*For the Lord, the God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away : for, one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of Hosts ; therefore, take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.*

The corrupt reading here spoken, is thus, of the vulgar Latine: *Cum odio habueris, dimitte.*

*Observ.*

**H**ere followeth the amplyfication : reading corrupt; thus better read. The Lord of Hostes saith, he hates dismission, and putting away ; yet, he covers this iniquity with a cloak. For the other reading. 1. Crosseth the purpose of the Spirit of God ; the Lord reproves them, for dismission; and therefore improbable, he should here speak of approbation, or allowance. 2. Implies an untruth. For, the Lord never thus said, by way of warrant ; but only *Moses* permitted, *for hardness of heart*. Though the Lord hath protested, to hate this sin, yet they commit it, and cover it with a cloak, that is, with pretence of, know not what, liberty permitted them, by *Moses*.

Now, here mark, how wicked men commit the most hainous sins, many times, under colour and cloake ; 1 *Sam.* 15. *Saul* knew well enough, disobedience was odious unto God ; yet, having the cloak of a good intention, securely commits it : in 1 *Pet.* 2. The libertines, in the first Church, they took to themselves liberty in sinning ; this oak they had, Christ had made them free ; these wretches here, took *Moses* permission for a warrant, and a cloake for their sinning.

*Use.*

Like colours, and pretences, see we, even at this day, in many

many of our people sinning : See we a few of them  
 1. Yee shall see the examples of Saints pretended : But  
 let men enquire, how lawfull ; or, whether by priviledg ;  
 or, whether in the same manner, upon like grounds ; For  
 these cases often vary actions. 2. Scripture abused ; its  
 lawfull to do good, on the Sabbath, &c. But, remember  
 they must be necessary good duties ; yet so, as that it may  
 not be thine own works ; they must ever be works of  
 mercy.

3. We must live, saith the usurer.

*Answ.* And thou must live in obedience to the law of  
 God ; besides, the strumpet, and the thiefe may pretend  
 the same.

4. Humane law, and connivence of Magistrates.

*Answ.* Here the Lord tries thee, whether thou doest,  
 indeed, in sincerity, fear God. 2. Connivence in Magi-  
 strates warrants not transgression in the people. 3. Di-  
 stinguish we must betwixt permissions, and commands.

5. Commands.

*Answ.* All such must have limitation, in the Lord ; *Eph.*

6. 5. See *Hos.* 5.

*Therefore, take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not trea-  
 cherously* ] And admonition of three branches. 1. A du-  
 ty. 2. A Reason. 3. A meanes to perform the duty.

Admonition drawn out of the former words : Sith  
 this liberty of divorce is so cross to Gods ordinance, so  
 contrary to his intendment, manifested in creation, so  
 hatefull to God, so injurious to the wife with whom a  
 covenant is entred ; therefore, keep your selves in your  
 spirits, and transgress not.

Out of the illative thus made, we may observe the rea-  
 son, why it pleaseth the Lord, to convince of sins, and to  
 use aggravations ; and it is for our admonition, that we  
 should take heed how, by them, we defile our selves : The  
 end of conviction is our admonition ; See *Ezek.* 18. and  
*Ier.* 18.

*Observe.*

Now, Brethren, the Lord hath dealt mercifully with us, in this kingdome, this way, by many meanes labouring to work conviction : and happy we, if it might have this effect, to work in us admonition, and care to avoid sin. The usuall meanes whereby the Lord convinceth of sin, are these. 1. His word. 2. Afflictions. 3. His vengeance on others. 4. The controullement, and check of our own conscience. And, in none of these, hath the Lord been behinde with us; as *Paul*, sin is not imputed, where is no Law; and, *Rem. 5. 20.* *The law entered, that sin might abound.* Beloved, in daies of blindness, many sins were swallowed up, that were most fearfull, in the sight of God, Idolatry, blasphemy, breach of Sabbath, &c. And those, that are every where, called works of darkness. Now, in these dayes of light, the Lord hath shewed us *what is good*, *Mic. 6. 8.* and as well, what is evill, by the light of his word; shall it not be our shame, if being convinced of sin, we continue therein?

Second meanes, afflictions; the smart whereof discovers also the hainousness of our sins; in time of ease, sins sometimes are known, but, scarce thoroughly considered; afflictions, *Iob 33. 16.* Open the eare, &c. And, how the Lord hath dealt with us, this way, if we have eyes, we cannot but see; following us with many of his plagues, and heavy judgments; even Pharaoh could then, under affliction, confess, I have sinned.

Third meanes of conviction, exemplary vengeance; of which, besides the records of Scriptures, other stories are frequent; and the Lord thereby would shew unto us, how to esteeme, and account of our sins: Usurers many brought to beggary; drunkards cloathed with raggs; false swearers ruinated in their families; adulterers brought to a morsell of bread: these are our convictions, would God they were our warnings.

Fourth meanes, check of conscience: *The heart smites it self*, *1 Sam. 24. 5.* and, *2 Sam. 24.* As, the Disciples of Christ,

Christ, did not our hearts burn within us, whilest he talked with us, and opened unto us, the Scripture? The like question if I should propound unto us; I know, they would answer, they have often felt it: Beloved, happy he, whom the Lord thus chastens, if he be thereby admonished; and, woe to us, if being convicted of sin, we still continue therein.

Luk. 24. 23.

Beloved, let me exhort, therefore, every one of us, to whom the Lord hath been thus merciful, to reveal our sins, and to convince us of them: that the Lord may attain his end in us, to work in our hearts a care to depart from evil: how are we convinced in our judgments, by the Lords judgments, of many fearful, and crying sins? Why resolve we not to leave them?

Let me add reasons. 1. Continuance of sin, after conviction, as it hardens the heart; so makes it the sin much more haynous in the sight of God. *If ye were blinde, ye should have noe sin, Joh. 9. 41. & Jam. 4. 17. To him that knowes to do well, and doth it not, to him it is sin,* with an emphasis. Every sin, after conviction, is doubled, Ezr. 9. 13. after all this, we have sinned. 2. Reprobates ascend thus far, to see sin, and acknowleig it; Pharaoh could say, *I and my people are sinners*; but (forsaking) of sin, is that only, that argues sound grace; *The fear of the Lord, is to depart from evil, to hate pride, arrogancy, and every evil way, Prov. 8. 13.*

Wherefore beloved, let us thus resolve, every of us, as it pleaseth God, more and more to enlighten us, to see our sins, and rightly to know them; so, with all speed and earnestness to leave them. I doubt not, but Prophecy, at this day, hath in many of us, the same effect, that it had in the Primitive Church, by Gods ordinance, 1 Cor. 14. Would God! as it convinceth, so it might work detestation, and care to avoid sin.

And hence may we observe an order to be kept of us, in ministring admonitions unto the people. First, to convince.

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Observ.

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vince. Then, to admonish, and exhort, that is : First, to make sin known, before we admonish to leave it; and this that enjoyed, 2 *Tim.* 4. 4. *With doctrine*, implying, that doctrine must be the ground of all exhortations, and admonitions. And, the practice of Prophets, is. First to labour to convince, then, exhort they to forsake, *Ier.* 3. 13, 14. *Know thine iniquity, then, turn again.* Reason of it, conscience ever works upon principles of judgment; till those be planted, conscience never doth her office, in accusing, or condemning. Therefore it is, that an erroneous, or ignorant conscience, is never moved with any reproofe never so sharp, any threatening never so severe; persecution, a grievous sin; yet while not known to be such, or thought, erroneously, to please God, *Ioh.* 16. never moves conscience, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15, 16. And, therefore mark, deal with an ignorant body that is not informed, give him the best exhortations, use the forciblest persuasions, thou movest them no more, then so many stones, &c.

*Use.*

Now, brethren, let us learn hence the method of admonition; it's a duty every where enjoined unto us, and that by divers reasons, *Lev.* 19. 17. 1. From the perill wherein they are, hardening, and destruction, *Heb.* 3. 13. 2. From the excellency of the work, *Iam.* 5. ult. 3. Nighness of conjunction. But would we use it profitably? learn to administer it discreetly, and orderly; that is, first, convince; then admonish, reprove, exhort. Till thou bee't able to convince an usurer, a swearer, &c. thou shalt but beat the ayre, and prove more ridiculous, than profitable unto him.

And here, beloved is to be bewailed a defect of many of us, of good affections, I confess; would God, I could say also, of as good a judgment, and knowledg! that are ready, in every transgression, to minister reproofes sharp enough. Now that they reprove, and sharply also, I blame not; but this that I would exhort unto, that we should

should labour to reprove, as out of certain knowledg; and be able, first, to shew the sin, before ever thou reprove it, as a sin; And, brethren, how contemptible wholesome admonitions are grown, amongst swinish sinners, who sees not? Let me exhort, therefore, to labour for knowledg this way: Reasons. 1. Mark, if thou wilt, but the different carriage of prophane men, towards men, divers diversly reprovng: How scoffingly carry they themselves, in all reproofes of the ignorant? Now, let a man that hath knowledg deale with them, that is able to convince their judgments, how doth he even arraign them, and fill them, many times, with fear and trembling? And, how fearfull are they, to oppose any thing? Great is the fear of conscience once convinced; and as audacious is a wicked heart, when it is not feretted out of the starting holes. 2. Add unto this, that not every admonition hath a blessing promised, but such as is grounded on the word of God; as we say of preaching, its the mean to convert; yet it's only, when the (pure) word of God is preached. 3. Courage in the reprover is hereby much encreased, when as he is sure, his ground is good; as, on the other side, we cannot but fault, and halt in admonishing, that deal either ignorantly, or upon uncertainties.

We are all taught, that desire to be free from our sins, and the dominion of them, to labour to be well, and throughly acquainted with the law of God: Alas! how much liberty do even Gods children take to themselves, and fail in that main duty of teaching themselves! *Rom. 2. 21.* whilst they adventure to teach others; even by this, that they know not their own wayes, nor can judg of their actions, whether they be good, or evil: as *Paul* saith of himself, *Rom. 7. 9.* Before the law came he was alive; and for concupiscence, he never thought it a sin; and then, how could he bewaile it, till God opened his eyes, to see the law, and true meaning thereof?

This made *David* circumspect, *Psal. 119. 12.* Pray we, therefore,

\* Rev. 3. 18.

therefore, Beloved, for \* eye-salve, that we may see our sins, and therein our own miseries : How many weaknessees are there, in Gods dear children, springing from this fountain of ignorance ? wouldest thou, then, forsake sin ? Learn, first, to know it ; and therein, learn to examine thy self by the law of God ; self-love is blind, and mens opinions uncertain, or partiall, but Gods law, a law of liberty, most free in reprovng, *Iam. 2. 12.*

Observ.

*Take heed to your Spirit.* ] Followes now the mean prescribed ; and that is, the keeping of our selves, in our Spirit : (By Spirit) understand here the affections, and desires of the heart : [ Keeping ] is the restraint, and mortifying our vile affections, and that strait watch we ought to keep of our hearts ; and this is the best remedy to prevent, or cure our actuall transgressions, to look to, and watch over our headstrong affections : *Solomon*, in other words, *Prov. 4. 23.* thus enunciates it, *Keep thy heart, with all diligence*; and mark his Reason, *out of it, are the issues of life* ; from it, as from the fountain, proceed our actions : And, our Saviour ; *Mat. 1. 19.* gives this Reason, *out of it come whatloeyer enormities in the life* ; and the fleshly affections thereof, *defile the man.*

Besides that, the Lord ever measures both good, and evill, more by the affection, then by the act ; good things done weakly, are favourably accepted, while the heart, and affection is upright before God ; evill things, though evill, yet are most odious, when the affections are inordinate.

Use

So that, we here see, and let us learn to practise, the right method of leaving our sins ; namely, the watching over our headstrong corruptions. It little avails, that the hand is restrained from oppression, whilst the \* heart runs after covetousness ; not accepted with God, that we forbear practice of lust, whilst our hearts burn with fleshly desires : And, how many see we externally reformed, after the sight of their sins, and smart of Gods judgments, that yet turn back to their old sins, whiles the heart conti-

\* Ezek. 33. 31.

nues

nues chained with corruptions.

Meanes, to secure the heart, and to safe-guard it from the annoyance of vitious practices. 1. That the minde, be occupied in holy Meditations; that minde is the *ἡγεμονικὴ*, Rules all. 2. Due consideration, that the hearts, and reines are known unto God; hence Saint *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. *Sanctifie the Lord God in your hearts.* 3. The guarding of the senses; by these \* windows Satan enters, many times, and by them conveys his poyson into our hearts. 4. Something available hereto, is restraint of the outward man, from practice of sin; the pleasures felt en-thrall the heart, as, *Hos.* 4. 11. *Whoredome, and Wine, &c.* 5. Pray to God, to sanctifie it, by his Spirit: The fountain must first be purged, before the streames can be whole-some.

\* *Ier.* 9. 21.

VER. 17.

*Ye have wearied the Lord with your words: yet ye say, wherein have we wearied him? when ye say, every one that doth evill is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, where is the God of judgment?*

**Y**E have wearied the Lord with your words ] The sence: we are to understand, there is no reall wearisomness incident into the Lord; he is a pure act: as he lives eternally, without decay of life; as he works wonders, without pain; beares up all by his wondrous providence, without defatigation; punisheth, without passion; so is patient, without pain. But, this is attributed unto God, *ἀνθρωποποιῶν*, by a Metaphoricall speech, which must thus be unfolded; that, as men, when they have long borne an heavy and tedious burthen, hasten to depose it, that they may lighten their carriage, and gather refreshing: So, the Lord here professeth, that he had long borne their wickedness, but now would bear no longer: So, every where.



the Lord thus expresseth his patience, and long-suffering; professing, for our better understanding, a kinde of wearisomness, that he feeles in bearing; *Amos 2.13. I am pressed under you, as a cart, that is loaden with sheaves.*

The words have in them, three things.

1. An accusation, by the Prophet.

2. An apology, by the people.

3. The prooffe of the imputation, by instance.

In the accusation, are two things. 1. The fact. 2. The mean. By this weariness, we are to understand, two things. 1. the Lords long patience, even *ad defatigationem usque*, towards the wicked; and the abuse thereof, by the people. 2. His readiness, to turn patience into wrath, and to execute vengeance upon the transgressours. Of the first of these. This is that the Lord, every where, challengeth to himself, and in common experience, is seen to practise, *Exod. 34.6. & Rom. 2.4. ἀποχὴ, χρηστότης*; yea, even towards the vessels of wrath, *Rom. 9.22*. So, after many long provocations, yet he gives to the old world, an hundred and twenty years; so to the *Amorites*, though their sins were ever crying, yet four hundred years given them, *Gen. 15.13*. And, this is that, that every one of us have had plentiful experience of. What a long course of sinning ran we along in, before our calling; and how bountifull found we the Lord towards us? And which, even of the desperate wretches amongst us, can say, that the Lord hath been hasty, to take notice of, or punish his rebellions? The reason is, to lead us to repentance, if it were possible, *Rom. 2.4.* or otherwise, to leave the impenitent, excuseless.

Use.

Now beloved, this should teach us amendment of life, and lead us on to repentance: but to see, how this patience of the Lord is abused to wantonness; because the Lord bears long, therefore, continue we in sin, and heap up wrath. See *Eccles. 8.11, 12, 13*.

Secondly, this is propounded to us, as a pattern, to imitate

late, in our own provocations, *Col. 3. 13. & 2 Tim. 24. 25.* that we should bear patiently, as good children. And it condemns that hasty, and rash desire, in hastening unto vengeance, in our personal injuries; see *Paul, Tit. 3. 3.* we forward also, till God called; and many times, the latter in calling, outstrips the former, in obedience.

God will not alwaies bear our provocations: its true, that he bears long; but at length, he comes, and puts end to patience, that justice may take place. So, with the old world, *Ierusalem, Egypt*; see *Psal. 50. 21, 22.* One reason is, that he may shew himself, though he be a bearer of evil, yet to be not lover of it. 2. That we may know, it is not an idle name of God, but, hath in him actual, and active justice, therefore gives he us continual experiments of his taking notice of mans sins and hatred of them; see *Isa. 1. 24.*

And, what may we learn hence; but, to take heed, how we continue to provoke the Lord to wrath, by our continued sins; surely, though the Lord keep long silence, yet at length he reproves, by his judgments: And as *David* saith, *Psal. 50. 21, 22. Consider this, ye that forget God; lest he tear you in pieces like a lion, and there be none to deliver.* The Lord puts upon him, the habit of these violent creatures, the more to terrifie. Sometimes, he seems to sleep; and *David* saith: *The Lord awaked out of sleep; but in the day of his wrath, he is furious, and none can stand before him.* And, would God beloved, ye could all lay this to heart, swearers, drunkards, &c. Surely, the restraint would be much.

*The mean followeth; by their words*] So that, words have their weight, and are marvellous provoking in the eares of the Lord; yea, brethren, *And after dicam*: works sometimes, provoke not so much, as proud and contemptuous speeches; See *Mal. 3. 13.* And would God, these men, that speak so lightly of their words,

Observ.

Use.

Observ.

that are most blasphemous, would lay this to heart, saying, words are but wind.

*Use.*

And, let it teach us all, to pray, with *David*, to the Lord, to keep the door of our lips. Sundry reasons there are of it. 1. We are countable even for idle words, much more for blasphemous, *Matth. 12. 36*, 2. By them is our righteousness, or unrighteousness declared: a good man, good things; an evil man brings forth evil things. Amongst all speeches, first, stoutness in words, and desperate speeches. 2. Blasphemies, that impose upon the Lord any thing unbecoming his majesty. 3. Justifications of such speeches.

*Observ.*

*Yet yet say wherein?* ] Here is their apology. From whence we note, how unwilling a wicked man is, to acknowledge his sins; and how he stands up, to justify himself, even against God himself. The reasons are. 1. Secret hypocrisie in the heart; none so wretched, but he would fain seem religious. 2. Ignorance of the will of God.

*Ob.* If any shall say, that Gods children do thus, sometimes.

*Ans.* They are to be understood, as speaking of particular righteousness, in some particular cause, wherewith they are burthened by men: The distinction is usuall; *justitia persona, & justitia causa*: So *David* labours to clear himself of those particulars, that *Doeg*, and other adversaries imposed on him, in respect of *Sauls* person, and his aspiring to the kingdom. 2. They thus speak, as, in respect of men, not of God; and therefore, when they come to deal with the Lord, they acknowledge their sins.

*Ob.* 2. *Jobs* example is alledged, as justifying himself before God.

*Ans.* *Iob* must thus be understood, as speaking of his freedom from hypocrisie; and that he was, in the Lords service, upright in the sight of God; whereas his freinds condemn

condemne him of hypocrisie, he challengeth to himself uprightnes; See *Iob* 8. 20. & 9. *per tot.* and therefore, when he comes to speak of himself, in respect of his infirmity, he acknowledgeth his sins; *Iob* 9. 2, 3, 20.

And, let this teach us, to acquaint our selves with our own sins, and corruptions: to which purpose. 1. Know the Law of God, and therein diligently view thy self. 2. Compare thy self with God, not with man: Whiles we look on our selves, and compare our selves with men, we seem *semidei*, as half Gods; but, look up to God, and thy righteousness will appear unclean, *Iob* 9. 2. 3. Consider, there may be many corruptions which we see not; *I know not mine own soul*, *Iob* 9. 21.

Use.

When ye say, every one that doeth ill, is good in the sight of the Lord] Here is the instance: Let us see their conclusion, which is disjunctive; either God an approver of the wicked, or else no God of judgment, that is, regards not things done on the earth; or else, indeed, there is no God at all: Hear their *medium*, *Mal* 3. 14, 15. Because the Lord punisheth not, but prospereth the wicked. 2. Afflicts, and delivers not his own children.

The like blasphemous thoughts are in wicked men, at this day, which also, sometimes, they utter with their mouths; they see not, but the Lord blesteth them, in temporall things, as well as others, that are more nice, and precise, and stand upon points: yea, this that, wherewith *David* confesseth himself to be much turmoiled, to doubt of Gods providence, love of the wicked, and seeming hatred of his children; *Psal* 37. & 73. So *Jeremy*, chap. 12. 1.

Observ.

It shall not be amiss, therefore, a little, to shew a mean, to fortifie our selves against this Godless, and blasphemous temptation; and, for the wicked, these conclusions shall be proved. 1. That it may well enough accord with the justice of God, to forbear, prosper, blest, in temporall things, even wicked men; *Eccles* 9. 1. First of all, know

know we, that the will of God, and his appointment, is the rule of justice; see this, *Rom. 9.* in the case of Election, and Reprobation; God wills not things, because they are just; but they are just, because he wills them: This conclusion thoroughly seated in judgment, stops the mouths of wicked men, and restrains from many blasphemies; so that, though the Lord bear, yet, considering it's his will, who may finde fault? The second conclusion, that the Lord is an absolute Lord; having free power to dispose of his blessings, and no man may ask a reason of his counsells, *Rom. 9 & 11.* Seeing then, that these things are all his own; who should ask him a reason of his dispensation? See also *Matth. 20. 15.* A third conclusion; that what is lawful for men, cannot but be much more lawful for God. But, man sometimes delays, and his delays are not censured of injustice. The Prince useth not allwaies martial law, but in extremity, when he fears outrage; they are kept in prison, till the day of tryal, and conviction; and after conviction, and condemnation, have a respite, to prepare for death: and, thus the Lord deals with the wicked, respitting, and delivering them; and therefore, weigh by the end, not by the beginnings. A fourth conclusion; that the Lord, for good ends, reserves the wicked to punishment; and, in the mean time, prospers them with temporall things; as, 1. For exercise of his children, so *Asbur, Isa. 10. 5.* deferred, to execute Gods wrath upon Israel, and Jerusalem; so the *Gibeonites* reserved, to be *Pricks* in the eyes, and *thornes* in the sides of his children; and thus the Lord, at this day, reserves. And beloved, what would become of us, were it not so? 2. To declare his power; 1. in preservation of his own children; how wonderfully shews this the power of the Lord? that, notwithstanding all the attempts of the wicked, yet still his Church is preserved; as, *Exod. 1. 12.* The *Israelites* vexed, but the more vexed, the more encreased. 2. In conversion; Beloved, it may be, there



there are amongst the very wicked themselves, some, in whose conversion, and salvation, the Lord means to glorifie his rich grace, *Mat. 13. 30.* Not the *tares*, but the *wheat* also: If the Lord had taken away *Paul*, in persecution, his grace had never so much appeared; and, this that we see daily, men brought from power of darkness, to the kingdom of *Jesus Christ*. 3. In their overthrow, and confusion; never had Gods name been so marvellous over the world, if he had presently shewn his power, in the destruction of *Pharaoh*; but, thus permitting him to fortifie himself, and then to overthrow him, this shewed his power; like at this day, when they are flourishing like Cedars, then cuts he them down. A third end, this serves much to illustrate his justice, when he thus beares, and invites, by all meanes, to repentance, and yet men turn not: *I gave her space to repent, Rev. 2. 21.* Who cannot but acknowledg the justice of God, in their condemnation?

Yea, beloved, what if wicked men are punished? what if punished in these very things, wherein they think themselves blessed? These two things I will briefly evidence. First, that the wicked are never without punishment. Secondly, that the very blessings, for which they applaud themselves, are their punishments.

For the first, know we, that punishments are not all of one sort; some are internal; some external; some eternal. Now, for internal punishments, we see them evident upon them; as 1. Horror of conscience, in many of them; can there be a more fearful judgment? This, perhaps, we see not, but they feel in their inward restlessness, *Isa. 57. ult.* See *Cain* flying (if he could) from himself; *Psalm* a terror to himself, *Ier. 20. 4* *Achitophel*, hanging himself; as the *Romans* were wont to make the crucified carry their own cross; so God hath made the wicked to carry this cross, of an evil, an accusing conscience.

*Ob.* If it be said, they all feel it not:

*Ans.* First, that I much doubt of. Secondly, they have

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judgment much more fearful, hardness of heart, the fear-fullest judgment, that God in his wrath, can inflict; see in *Pharaoh*. Thirdly, sins themselves are fearful punishments; *Rom. 1. 24, 26, 28*. And, what drudges they are, what toil they take, to enjoy the pleasures of their sins? How unquiet sleeps; what filthy belchings feels the drunkard? Temporary; are in their persons, or in the things about them; as, sometimes, graceless, and unfortunate children; besides these, there are *pæna posthuma*, surviving plagues: The posterity smarts for the sins of the fathers, *Job 21. 19*. God layes up the iniquity of the father, for the child: And, their very outward-blessings, what curses are they unto them? The riches of the wicked suffer them not to sleep, fill them with cares, and sorrows, many, and many; their honours exposed to envy, their pleasures have bitterness, &c. Eternal punishments are those, that are repited, till after this life.

Use

Now, brethren, see we the use of all this. Hence, may Gods children learn to stablish themselves against that common temptation, wherewith Satan, sometimes, absoles them, and labours to draw them from their confidence; *Dissentur, non auferitur*; wait but a while, and thou shalt see the Lord manifest his justice in their punishment, and overthrow. And, hence likewise let wicked men learn to terrifie and dismay their hearts, &c.

For the second, that it may well agree with the justice of God, thus to afflict his own children.

First, there is none so just, but must be forced to confess, he hath in him, what deserves punishment; no not *Infans unius diei*; we bring corruption out of the womb, and suck it from the breasts of our mother, *Psal. 51. 5. Rom. 5. 12*. Its true, that *Achans* children perish with him, but yet not without their own sin, being corrupt by nature; so of the dearest servants of God. And, who is there, under any affliction, but must needs say, as that good thief on the cross, I am justly in this condemnation

nation, Luk. 23. 41: view them in their original; or, in their end, they are good for Gods children. Their end.

1. Exercise. 2. Chastisement: as exercises. 1. *Firmant.*
2. *Probant.* 3. *Præunt.*

1. *Firmant.* Afflictions are Gods schoole-houses, where-in he traines us up to hardship: skill in sailing, is best learnt by tempest; in warfare, by fight; as trees tossed with winde take deeper root, so, &c. and those tenderlings unused to hardship, how doth a little affright them?

2. *Probant, Dent. 8.* and, without these, men know neither the soundness, nor measure of their graces: affliction tryes: how many please themselves in their graces, whom affliction discovers to be but hypocrites. They shew also, what thy strength is.

3. *Præunt*, when as by example, they draw others, as *Phil 1. 14.* and *Abel's* blood still cries; to imitate his patience, and obedience, see *Heb. 11. 4.*

Secondly, chastisement; so it profits; as being. 1. Either means to reduce us; we going astray, these bring us home again, *Psal. 119. 67.* 2. As bonds and restraints; how strongly enclined we are unto all sins, we finde in experience; who blames a father, if he take from his childe a knife, that would hurt him? Or the Lord; if he withhold outward things, which he knows would not profit us? 3. Besides that, they are excellent purgations, cleansing us from corruptions. 4. Weigh, if thou wilt, that he afflicts in measure, with regard to our strength, *Isa. 28. 7.* 5. Sustaineth in afflictions. Thou hast seen many afflicted, thou never sawest any of Gods children forsaken, *2 Cor. 4. 9.* 6. Consider the reward, at last, of the afflicted, *2 Cor 4. 17.*

Hence then, learn we all to lay our hands upon our mouths; and, whatsoever affliction betides us; or prosperity to the wicked; let this conclusion be ever holden, that God is still good to Israel, an still and hater of iniquity. And, in this point especially, fortifie our selves; because

Sathan, in this case, labours to perswade, that God is either unjust, or unmerciful, &c.



## CHAP. 3. VER. I.

*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple: Even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hostes.*



We have here a two-fold prophecy.

First, of *John Baptist*, the fore-runner of Christ.

Secondly, of Christ himself.

*John* is described.

First, by his office, the messenger of the Lord.

Secondly, by his proper effect, to prepare the way for Christ.

Christ doubly described. 1. By his titles. 2. And office. 3. And adjunct. Title, the Lord. Office, Angel of the Covenant. Adjunct. 1. Whom ye seek. 2. His coming, by the speed. 3. Place, to his temple. 4. Ratification, *saith the Lord of Hostes.*

As touching the meaning of the words; some difficulty was caused by the glosses of the Jews; some teaching, that the Lord should send an Angel, that was such, by nature, as an harbinger for Christ. But, none can better interpret this, than the Lord Christ himself, *Math. 11. 10.* applying this to the person of *John Baptist*: And 2. The word Angel generally signifies any messenger; though sometimes given to the spirits Angelical, *καὶ ἰσχυρῶς*. Besides that, its no  
new

new speech, that ministers are called Angels, *Rev. 2. 1.*

Now, by this scripture, we may thus profit. That every man naturally is unprepared to the receiving of Christ; else, what needs such preparing of the heart? And this will appear, if we consider how hardly we are brought to deny our selves, and to forsake our selves, that we may embrace him: Nature cannot abide to be nothing, in its own salvation. Besides, the dominion of Christ is marvellous harsh to flesh and blood; therefore, the state of a natural mans heart compared to mountains, and valleys, *Luk. 3. 5.* And moreover, the devil keeps possession, *Luk. 11. 21.*

Now, beloved, labour we to feel this; and surely, it's one step towards Gods kingdom, to come thus far, as to see, and bewail our own unfitness to receive him. Then, (saith one) are the mountains brought low, when our stout hearts are abated; and we are humbled, and brought on our knees, to confess, and bewail our own unworthiness.

Secondly, Its the office of a Minister, to prepare a way for Christ, that is, to prepare a people for Christs dominion; This was *Johns* office; and, *2 Cor. 11.* *Paul* of himself: therefore, we are called children of the bride-chamber, &c. This must be our admonition, and provocation to diligence, this way: and, suffer your selves to be prepared; See *Luk. 1. 16, 17.*

The meanes are. 1. Humiliation, by the law, *Gal. 3. 10.* 2. Bewailing of our former lives. 3. Purpose of amendment. 4. Longing after Christ.

*The Lord whom ye seek*] This the description of the children of God, to long after Christ; so *Abraham*; see *Iob. 8. 56.* Now, beloved, there is a three-fold coming of Christ mentioned, in the Scripture. 1. By incarnation. 2. By his Spirit, into the heart. 3. In the clouds, to judgment; the first and second here understood: And this business may be analogically applied to Gods Children. Jewes never so longed to see Christ in the flesh,

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as Gods children do, to feel his presence in their heart.

Now, by this, try we our selves, whether we be children of God, or no ; we shall know it by this, that longing desire we feel, to be brought into communion with Christ, by his Spirit ; as also, by that desire we have, and longing after his appearing, *2 Tim. 4. 8. Rev. 22. 20.* Sundry Reasons for this. 1. Present afflictions ; it being Gods ordinance, that we shall never, in this earthly tabernacle, be free from them. 2. Subjection, and bondage under sins, that the best feel themselves tied unto ; *Israelites* long for deliverance, under their burdens, *Exod. 1. ult.* How not we more, from this miserable bondage ? 3. The glorious, and comfortable presence of Christ, *Phil. 1. 23.*

*Shall suddenly come to his Temple, &c.* ] The description of Christs comming, by the place whither ; to his Temple : namely, of *Ierusalem*, the place of Gods worship ; and thither especially, for this end, to purge it of those corruptions, that were grown into the worship of God.

Now, this prophecy touching Christs comming to the Temple, and purging the worwip of God, hath been accomplished. In the Evangelicall History y emay read it : And, the meanes which he used to purge the same, were : 1. Doctrine. 2, Discipline. For Doctrine, read *Mat. 5. & 15.* For Discipline, *Ioh. 2. 14, 15, 16.*

Now, Brethren, sith this is such an excellent work, the purging of the worship of God, as that the Messiah, and Saviour of the world, comes to perform it ; mark, what we learn : every one, in his place, to help forward this work so excellent : And, in respect of the publique, and supream Magistrate, our duty is, to be petitioners unto the Lord ; so to encline his heart, that we may have his worship pure from all defilements ; not only of gross Idolatry, but even of humane Inventions : See *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. &c.*

Next, unto every of us, in our families, this must be our care, as it was *Joshua's*, for us, and our house-holds, to see, that

that the worship of God be kept pure, and sincere : Beloved, every family is, or should be, a temple for Christ, to be worshipped in ; *Rom. 16.* We read of Churches in private mens houses ; This was *Jacobs* Commendable, and Holy Practice, *Gen. 35. 2, 3.* *going up to Bethel to build an Altar unto the Lord his deliverer ; commands his household, and all that were with him, to put away the strange Gods that were amongst them, and to cleanse themselves.*

Sundry Reasons might be given for it. 1. That even for neglects of duties, this way, Gods wrath, many times, hangs over our heads ; *Exod. 4. 24, 25.* in *Moses* : And the defects this way, are reproveable ; one too profane amongst the vulgar, whose profession is, that they hire not servants for Gods service, but for their own ; And therefore, for matter of Religion, and the worship of God, let them do as they will ; all which argues an earthly minde ; and, by the presence of such servants, what blessings can be expected ? Surely, as the Lord, many times, blesteth a whole family, for the presence of one religious servant, *Gen. 30. 27. & 39. 5.* So, for one graceless, profane servant, the whole family tastes of the Lords wrath. A second neglect is, herein, perhaps more tolerable, but yet as dangerous ; and that is this, that you may observe, even in some of Gods own Children ; some care of civility they have, which restrains them from gross breaches of the second table, drunkenness, whoredome, &c. Perhaps, look also to externall conformity ; but, for matter of judgment in religion, altogether careless : These things ought not so to be, but Instruction, and Correction, must, this way, go together.

To every one of us, also, may this duty be pressed ; for even we also are Temples for the Lord to dwell in, *1 Cor. 6. 19.* And therefore, must we also be carefull, this way, to keep our selves from pollutions in the worship of God ; and if any have crept upon us, labour to purge them ; See *Dent. 4. 12, 13.*

And,

And, for this cause, positive duties this way tending are. 1. Continuall attendance unto the word of God, as the only comfortable rule of the worship of God. *Mat. 15.* 2. Beware of Philosophy, and vain deceit, *Col. 2. 8.* 3. Relying too-much upon the authority, and judgments of men, or of their writings: *Augustine* prayed for his mother *Monica*: And, this one cause of Romish Idolatry; whilst the word of God was laid aside, and writings of men advanced into their room. Not, that I condemn judicious reading of them; but yet, bring all to the touch, yea, even commands, and prescripts of Princes, *Hos. 5. 11.* *Ephraim* afflicted, and broken in judgment, because, he willingly followed the Commandment.

*The messenger (or, Angel) of the covenant*] He speaks, here, of the covenant of grace, made betwixt God and the seed of *Abraham*, touching life and salvation, to be obtained by faith, in Christs bloud. Now, Christ is called the Angel of this covenant, in two respects. 1. In respect of revelation. 2. In respect of mediation, and procurement.

In respect of revelation; so Divines teach, that the Lord, before incarnation, pleased, by Christ, to reveal his covenant unto man; so Christ that first talked with *Adam*, that renewed covenant with *Abraham*, that led the Israelites, &c. And of himself, *Ioh. 1.* He only reveals the Father unto us; he means, as making this covenant of grace; for otherwise, God known to the wicked, from the beginning, as creatour, governour, preserver; but, as a Saviour, and Redemer, known only in Christ.

In respect of mediation, because that in him, and for his sake, this covenant was made; see *1 Tim. 2. 5.* The mediator between God, and man; and in, and by him, it hath accomplishment, *2 Cor. 1. 20.*

Now, whereas Christ is the revealer of his covenant; me thinks, it will follow, that those to whom Christ was  
not

not known, they never knew this covenant; and therefore could not be partakers of salvation; I mean, the Gentiles to whom it pleased not God to reveal himself by Christ.

And therefore, that error, though compassionate, yet foul, of some, that taught that even the Gentiles, before Christ, that knew not Christ, were saved. I say not, but some Gentiles were saved; but, that any was saved, that knew not God, in Christ, the scripture no where sheweth, *Act. 4. 12. No other name. Isa. 53. 11. The knowledge of my righteous servant.*

Hence, we are taught to pray to Christ the interpreter, to manifest it unto thee; and with all, take heed, how we despise the word, and tenour of this covenant, *Heb. 2. 3.* the reasons are there given.

Again, whereas Christ alone is made the mediatur of the covenant; mark, how foully Papists delude themselves, and rob Christ of his honour, and set up saints, and Angels, for mediatours. They have coyned a distinction, of intercession, and redemption; severing those things, that God hath combined, in the person of Christ; the high Priest a type of both; and, *Rev. 8. 3.* Christ, the Angel, that stands to perfume our prayers. And, this the unspeakable comfort of a childe of God: it's true, that God hath been gracious unto us, in entring covenant; but, this our misery, that we keep not the condition; yet, this again our comfort, that the promises of God have not their ratification in us, but in Christ Jesus: Alas! what would become of us, if salvation depended upon the merit of our own obedience? how full of unbelieve? how weak in obedience? How presumptuous in disobedience? Yet, this the comfort, that (in Christ) the promises of God are *yea, and Amen, 2 Cor. 1. 20.*

Followeth the ratification, [*saieth the Lord of Hostes*] So, you shall see, that the Lord tyeth his children to no other evidence, but his word, for the accomplishment of all his

Promises, and predictions : *Thus saith the Lord*, and, *The mouth of the Lord hath spoken* ; and this, indeed, is faith, to rest in the assurance of Gods promises, because he hath promised. Other sciences have their demonstrations, and we have liberty, to enquire a reason of them; and not bound to rest in any mans, *ipse dixit* ; But, for matter of faith, the Lords word must be our only warrant.

*Use*

Now, as the Lord propounds this, as the only thing, wherein he would have his servants rest ; so let us labour, and learn to rest, and relye only upon the word of God, for accomplishment of all his promises : This is notable in *Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 18.* though no likelihood, to obtain seed, yet having Gods promise, he believes ; and, *Heb. 11. 19.* When the Lord commands him to take his son *Isaac*, in whom was the only apparent hope of the blessing promised ; yet, spares not him, being assured, that he who had promised, was able also to perform. Beloved in Christ, many excellent promises are given unto us in Christ ; life eternal, and glory unspeakable promised to all believers ; yet, as *Paul* speaks, *Col. 3. 3.* *This life is hid with Christ in God* ; and, *1 Joh. 3. 2.* *It hath not yet appear, what we shall be.* And, look to the outward State of Gods children, in this life, nothing more miserable : Well, yet, we have the Lords word, *The Lord of Hosts hath said it* ; and though we had no other evidence, me thinks, this should suffice us. God hath promised to dwell with a contrite heart, *and to revive him, that is of an humble spirit, Isa. 57. 15.* Beloved, perhaps, at present, we see nothing less, than reviving ; perhaps, even killing, *Iob 13. 15.* Here now is the power of faith, then to expect life, when we feel our selves in death ; *Godliness hath also the promises of this life, 1 Tim. 4. 8.* Food in famine, *Psal. 37.* Perhaps, we see no means, but now the Lord will prove our faith : And, indeed, thou canst never assure thy self, that thou hast any sound faith, till thou art come to this, to believe, even because the Lord hath said ; though thou seest no mean, before



fore thine eyes for accomplishment of his promise. Labour therefore, for this; and, here consider.

First, the truth of God, and his fidelity, as by long experience of all times thou mayest gather it. The Lord promised, to *Abraham*, to give *Canaan* to his posterity; *Abraham* lived in it, and his seed enjoyed it; so the Messiah; and he came.

Secondly, the power of God, in accomplishing his promise; these the two pillars of *Abraham's* faith, *Rom.* 4. 20, 21.

Verf. 2. *But, who may abide the day of his coming? and, who shall stand, when he appeareth? for, he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers sope, &c.* ] A description of the coming of Christ in the flesh, from the adjunct of terror, illustrated by the effect; who may abide his coming?

For the sence, it may be enquired, how this may be ascribed unto Christ, in respect of his coming in the flesh; For, first, his outward estate upon earth, was most despicable; his externall servants, fishermen; besides that, he came to comfort his people; and, *Mat.* 12. 20. It was said of him, that he should not *bruise a broken reed*? *Ans.* Distinguish the Persons, and the Scriptures will accord; Christ Jesus to his own Children, is comfortable, not terrible; but yet, to the wicked most terrible; yea, in his very incarnation, and that outward contemptible state, with what terror struck he the hearts of the ungodly! See *Mat.* 2. When they hear but tidings of Christs Birth, *Ierusalem*, and all, is in an uproare; and, when he comes meekly to *Ierusalem*, riding on an asse, how were they stricken with terror, and fear? *Mat.* 21. So that hence we may observe; that the very despicable state of Christ in the flesh, was unto the wicked most terrible, and discomfortable; mark how *Herod* quakes at the news; *Mat.* 14. If any be demanded, how this comes to pass? *Ans.* Partly, through the glimps of Divine Glory, that

*Observ.*

shined in that despicable State of Christ; partly, through their earthly mindes, while they favouring earthly things, feared the disturbance of earthly peace; partly, through conscience of rejecting him, and his word: partly, through a terrour, wherewith it pleaseth the Lord to strike them.

Now, beloved, if Christ comming in the flesh were so terrible to the wicked, what shall his glorious comming be? *Rev. 6. 16.* The wicked are there described, running to the hills to fall on them, and to the mountaines to cover them: And, this terrour, methinks, should perswade men, *2 Cor. 5. 10.* To forsake their sins, and to kiss the son, *Psal. 2. ult.* To submit to him, that he may guide them, by his word, and Spirit: The Prophet *Isaiah* propounds the question, *Who among us, shall dwell with devouring fire?* And answers to it, *Isa. 33. 14. 15.*

Use.

And, let it be our admonition, to labour betimes, to be reconciled unto him, who is, in his wrath, a consuming fire; behold, he commeth with clouds, *Rev. 1. 2 Thes. 1. 2.* The Lord is gracious unto us, in offering us meanes of reconciliation: Blessed are they, that receive them; and worth the day, that ever they were born, that reject them: And, let all such, as encourage themselves in their evils; because of Christs Incarnation, tremble at this: Alas! what avails it a wicked, obstinate sinner, that Christ came into the world, to reconcile us unto his Father? This is comfortable to a mourner, but, its the scourge of a wicked man: when he shall consider, how he hath trampled under his feet the blood of Christ, and crucified him by his sins, and rejected his grace, how can he but tremble?

*For he is like a Refiners fire, and like Fullers sope*] First, let us cleer this place of the glosses of Papists; they labour here to build the fire of purgatory; and why, trow we? but only, because, here is mention made of fire, and of purging fire: To which purpose, they apply that also, *1 Cor. 3. 13.* Against this dream, oppose we, First, the contradictory, and the proof of it. 1. This that the Scripture

ture every where teacheth, that we have, in Christ, perfect purgation from all our sins, both the guilt, and punishment of them, 1 *Ioh.* 1. 7. 2. That remission of sins is here, either finally lost, or everlastingly obtained, *Ioh.* 9. 4. *Walk while it is day.* 3. Whereas they confess, that we are in Christ, purged from all mortall sins; and all sins are mortal; apparent, that there remains no such purging, after this life. 4. Whereas they confess, that we are purged; à *Reatus peccatorum*, from the guilt of sins; how can they imagine any part of punishment to remain unto the children of God? for, doth God punish the Innocent? 5. *Rev.* 14. 13. Gods children are blessed, and said, at death, *to rest from their labours; and that their works follow them close.*

And, as for this place, its as absurdly, as any, applyed unto this purpose; For, 1. Its spoken of Christi's first comming in the flesh. 2. Its said, that Christ is this purging fire. 3. Its done for this end, that we may bring offerings unto God in righteousness, *vers.* 3. Now, will they say, that by these offerings, their mass is meant? how absurdly? For, have they masses, in purgatory? I think, indeed, there are Priests enough in hell; For, *Mat.* 5. 19. *They that pervert Gods people, are least in the kingdoms of God;* but, of masses in purgatory never dreame, no not Catholiques themselves,

See we then, what the sence of the words is, and in what respect Christ is compared unto fire, and Fullers sope.

*Ans.* In respect of his effects, like unto fire; and that, both in regard of the wicked, as also in respect of the children of God: In respect of the wicked, because, by his word, afflictions, and his Spirit, he purgeth the visible Church, works separation of the dross from the pure metall; so, *Mat.* 3. 12. He is described, as one having his fanne in his hand, and purging his floore: So see we daily, by his word, he separates; by afflictions also, he discovers hypocrisie.

And, what may this teach us ? Surely, to labour to be upright in the sight of God ; for Christ is as purging fire, and will surely sever the dross from the silver, and gold ; and, howsoever a man may long masque under the vizar of hypocrisie ; yet, sooner, or later, the Lord discovers him, 1 *Tim. 5. ult.* Some mens sins go before unto judgment.

See we the means, how it pleaseth the Lord, at this day, to work this separation : These are. 1. His word, this that fire, *Jer. 23. 29.* 2. Afflictions, this also the purging, and trying fire. 3. His judgment, whereby he gives over an hypocrite to some vile, and gross sins, whereby they discover themselves unto the world.

Again, he is so compared, in respect of his own servants ; because, he scoureth, and purgeth them from their sins ; no fire so purging, as Christ ; the fullers sope makes not so white, as the blood of Christ.

*Observ.*

Here, first, take notice, how fast corruption cleaves to all the posterity of *Adam* ; fire, and fullers sope, that is, that which is most purging, required to wash us from it. This *David*, *Psal. 51. 7.* knew well enough, and therefore prayed again, and again, for washing, and wringing in this fullers sope, of the spirit of Christ. And, what marvel ? seeing bred in us by nature ; confirmed also, and strengthened by custom, *Jer. 13. 23. Heb. 12. 1.* The sin hangs on fast, and presseth down sore ; and this that, in woful experience, all Gods children finde, how strong corruption is in them ; and, besides all this, the devil holds Captive, 2 *Tim. 2. 26.*

*Use.*

And, me thinks, it descryes that errour of our people, that think it so easy a matter to deliver themselves from the strength, and power of their corruptions ; let them alone, they say, they will repent, when they are old ; and, give them but their mindes, they are well enough ; and, they wonder at that care, and industry in the servants of God, in labouring to keep themselves unpotted of the world.

Now,

Now, alas ! Beloved, these men consider not how fast corruption cleaves unto them, while they thus speak : Is it so easy, to fly from corruption ? Try, if thou wilt, but in one sin, to which thou hast been accustomed; and then, tell me whether it be so easie a matter, to be delivered from thy corruptions. How do all Gods children finde evil present, when they would do good ? And; what violent assaults of Sathan are they encumbred withal ? And how, when they have much laboured, yet evil returns.

Lastly, see here the efficacy, and power of Christ, in purging of our sins. Fire it self; and the purest sope is not more powerful, then Christs grace : How powerful felt Gods children this, who from being, by nature, very vile, have become zealous for the Lord of Hostes, 1 *Cor. 6. 11 ?*

And, this should comfort the children of God, that endeavour to purge themselves from their sins. Beloved, it's that which often troubles the children of God, that they cannot get that power over their corruptions, that they desire; but, the more they strive, the stronger they seem to feel corruption in them : Well, wouldest thou, indeed, be purged ? behold here a purgatory; the spirit of Christ; only be sure of this, use the means. And this use of means should be both seasonable, and conscionable.

First, the word of God *Jer. 23. 29. Job. 17. 17.* The word is that truth, by which we are sanctified; and by it the Spirit, that alone purgeth, indeed, is conveyed into the heart; that is the two-edged sword, *Heb. 4. 12.* that searcheth corruption, getting into the very marrow, and bones; and, they forsake their own mercy, that leave it.

Secondly, add to this a second means, and that is, affliction, sanctified to Gods children; how powerful a means the cross sanctified is to Gods children, experience shews; which of Gods sons cannot say, that ever he was in affliction, but he found sin abated thereby, and himself,

Use.



self, in part, scour'd from corruptions: this that masters rebellion, subdues rebellion, makes carefull, and circumspect: And therefore, they forsake likewise their own mercy, and comfort, who fly too cowardly from afflictions; and, if there were no other argument, this alone should move us, to submit our selves to the cross; for that, its a meane to purge us. Lastly, prayer unto God, for his Spirit, *Psal. 51. 10, 12.* for, without his blessing, neither word, nor afflictions, nor any our own endeavours prevaile, any whit, to this purpose; therefore, see we many hearing continually, yet never a whit purged from corruptions; many followed with crosses, yet never the better, but the worse; pray God, therefore, to wash thee, and thou wilt be washed.

## VER. 5. 6.

*And, I will come neer to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hostes: For, I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

**C**omming of Christ, in the flesh, foretold, and described, by adjuncts. 1. Speed. 2. Terrour. 3. Ends; First, for his servants; to purge them; Secondly, for the wicked, to judg them: which latter we have, in this text, where there are three things considerable. 1. The end, and effect of Christ's comming in the flesh: in respect of the wicked; he comes to them, to judgment. 2. The meane, manner, or degree of execution, by witnessing. 3. The subjects of this execution, set down as in a synecdochicall induction of the particular *species*.

*I will come neer to you to judgment*] For the sence : God is alwaies neer, *Psal.* 139. but he is, then, especially, said to be nigh ; when he declares his nighnes by effects, of power, justice, mercy ; but nearest, while Christ lived with us.

The end of Christ's incarnation, was, not only to save his people ; but, to judg the wicked : and, he is not only a Saviour to his servants, but a judg to the ungodly : And, this that he professeth of himself, *Ioh.* 9. 39. & *Luk.* 2. 34. appointed for the fall, and rising again of many in *Israel* ; conferr *Isai.* 8. 14, 15. *Isai.* 28. 16.

*Ob.* If any shall object, that Christ testifieth of his Father ; that he sent him, not to judg the world, *Ioh.* 3. 17.

*Ans.* There are two ends of Christs sending ; one principall, which is to save : les principall, and as it were accidentall, to judg the world ; as Saint *Paul* saith of the Gospell, *2 Cor.* 10. 5, 6. Or, secondly, by the world, we are to understand, the world of believers, as *Ansin* ; (*est quidam quasi mundus credentium*) and *vers.* 18. ib. *I Ioh.* 2. 2.

*Ob.* Christ refused to do the office of a judg, being requested to decide the controversie, betwixt two brethren.

*Ans.* The place to be understood of a temporall judgment, after the custome of this life ; so Christ professeth to *Pilate*, that his kingdome was not of this world, *Ioh.* 18. 36. But, ever performed he the office of a spirituall judg, as ; *Ioh.* 9. 39.

Hence then it followeth, that Christ came not into the world, only to be a Saviour of his Church, or to be a Saviour to all ; sith the Lord here protesteth, that Christ he came man to the world, unto judgment : This point I have often proved. 1. Because of the eternall decree of God, which he would never cross, in sending Christ into the world ; nay, even in it had eye to the fulfilling of that

*Observ.*

eternall counsell. 2. For that, meanes of salvation are not granted to all, *Mat. 11. 23.* 3. That Christ excludes some from his intercession, *Iob. 17. 9.* 4. From absurdities; for Gods counsells must stand, and who can resist his will? and, it's most absurd to say, that God would faine save, but mans will hinders his intention, and desire; sith he that made the will, knows how to frame it to his own purposes.

And, therefore, beloved, vain is the confidence of those men, that expect salvation from Christ, whilst they live in their sins: Its true, that Christ is a Saviour of his people, *Mat. 1. 21.* but, a severe judg of all disobedient, and impenitent sinners: Its worth the noting that *Paul* hath, *1 Tim. 1. 9.* The law, saith he, is not given to the righteous, namely, as its the Ministry of condemnation: or the hand-writing of ordinances against us; but, its given to the lawless, and disobedient; and to them it stands still in force.

And therefore, let this be the Exhortation, as *Psalm 2. 12.* *Kiss the son,* that is, submit to his dominion, suffer him to your saviour; else, surely, you shall finde him your severe judg.

See we, a little, how Christ executed this office of judgment, upon the earth, in the dayes of his flesh, *Joh. 9. 39.* namely, by blinding them that saw, that is, by giving men up to blindness of minde, and hardness of heart: that pleasing themselves in opinion of their own knowledg, despised that knowledg of God which he laboured to teach them. And thus we finde Christ daily to execute judgment amongst us in the Church of God: though we see him not now executing outward vengeance upon the bodies of all ungodly men; yet spiritual judgments we see on many, in the Church of God; many given up to blindness of minde, and hardness of heart, and so prepared to condemnation.

Now, as meanes to avoid this judgment. 1. Take heed

heed of opinion of thine own knowledg, *Ioh. 9. 39.* *1 Cor. 3. 18.* 2. While we have light, walk in it, *Ioh. 13. 35.* 3. Shut not your eyes against it, but what the Lord would teach, learn to acknowledg; See *Ioh. 12. 37. 39.*

Next thing observable, is that part of judgment Christ here executed, in the dayes of his flesh. Judgment hath four acts. 1. Examination. 2. Conviction. 3. Sentence-giving. 4. Execution. Now, of these, this only is here noted, that here he executed the second office of a judg, which is, to convince of sin. Therefore, it is said of the Father in Christ, that he would be a swift witness against the *sooth-sayers*, &c. that howsoever he did not presently send them down to hell; yet he would convince them of their sins. For, this is the office of a witness, to convince, and give evidence of sins committed. Now, this Christ did, by sundry means.

First, by his word, whilst out of it, he evidenced unto the conscience of them, all their sins; so, by shewing the meaning of the law, he convinced the *Pharisees* of their corruptions, *Matth. 5.* By shewing the accomplishment of the Prophets predictions, he convinced them of infidelity, &c.

Secondly, by his Spirit, *Ioh. 16. 8, 9.* When he sent him down into his children; and, by a general work of the true Spirit of God, in the hearts of very cast awayes.

Thirdly, by his own holy and spotless life; as also, by the examples of his childrens obedience, in whose hearts it pleased him to be effectual.

And thus, we shall see, at this day, the Lord Christ execute that part of judgment committed to him, by his Father. Its true, that the Lord hath long patience, bears the very vessels of wrath prepared to destruction, respitting their execution; as we see, in dayly experience; But, let no man say, that therefore, he doth sit still, and not judg the wicked; except, we will say, that the judg of affize performs no office of a judg, but only, when he

delivers them over to be executed.

And see we, beloved; a little, this truth daily evidenced unto us in the Church, by the very preaching of his word, which is his testimony, *2 Cor. 10. 6.* How many times, perswade I my self, doth the desperateſt contemner of God, and all goodneſs, finde that in himſelf verified, *1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.* that he is convinced of all men, and judged of the miniſtry of the word; as, when out of the word of God, we ſhew the haynouſneſs of Adultery, Sabbath-breaking, &c! How ſtand ſuch offenders, like men arraigned at the barr; and ſay, ſecretly, in their hearts, they are guilty! yea, the very tryal of their countenance teſtifieth againſt them. Again, how doth the Spirit of God, in the word, ſmite them with fear, and horreur, that they tremble, and quake at the noiſe of Gods judgments denounced againſt them? Thirdly, the very examples of Gods children, *Heb. 11.* Whiles they ſubmit themſelves to the word of God, convince them alſo of their ſins.

*Uſe.*

The Uſe will beſt appear, if we ſhall conſider the ends, why it pleaſeth the Lord thus to convince us. They are two, according as the perſons are, in whom this is wrought:

Fiſt, in regard of Gods children, it's to humble them, by giving them ſight, and feeling of their ſins, that re-nouncing themſelves, they may ſupplicate to their judg, ſee *Aſt. 2. 37.*

Art thou, then, convinced in thy conſcience, out of the word of God, of thy ſins? This do, ſupplicate to the judg; ſurely, not all, whom the Lord convinceth, he condemneth; but, as a merciful judg, though he arraign all at the barr of his conſcience, by the Word, and Spirit; yet, whom he ſees broken in heart, purpoſing amendment, earneſtly begging for pardon, to ſuch he extends pardon, and remiſſion.

And therefore, beloved, if when thou art convinced, thou canſt thus do, happy art thou: and Gods children, that finde



finde these things, in themselves, have no cause to despair of pardon, and salvation. The end of conviction, in cast-aways, is their just damnation; for that, when the Lord convinced them in judgment, of their sins, they still persisted in them.

And therefore, beloved, take we all heed, how we live in our sins after conviction; when the Lord once brings us unto the barr, arraigns us in our consciences, by his word; shews us our sins, and the smart of them; if, after all this, we shall continue in them, heavy, and just is our condemnation. And this the state of many, at this day, as of swearing, drunkenness, &c. they know the hainousness of them, yet practise them; and, is it not just with God, to condemn? A thief arraigned, convicted, &c. but, by mercy of the judg reprieved, upon hope of better behaviour, if he shall still persist in theft, all acknowledg his execution most just.

Well, next, let us see unto whom Christ is sent, as a judg: *To soothsayers, and adulterers, &c.* Now, we are not so to understand the Prophet, as if he meant, that Christ should be a judg of these particulars only; but, as *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9. He includes all sins, in general.

Wherefore then these mentioned only?

*Ans.* Because most rise in the practice of that people. Thence we learn, who are Ministers, to apply our proofes, and denunciations of judgments; as generally to all sins; so most specially, to those particulars, rise in our people: It were long, to evidence this by the practice of the Servants of God, the Prophets: See *Iohn Baptist*, how excellently he fits his precepts, to the nature of the people, *Luk* 3. 10, 11. and, when he comes to *Herod*, he tells him of his particular sin, *Mat.* 14. 4. And *Paul*, before *Felix*, a bribing, and incestuous person, preacheth of justice, and temperance, *Act.* 24. 25.

It warrants like practice of ministers, at this day, that bind themselves, especially, to the particular corruptions of their

*Observ.*

*Use.*

their own people ; and, therefore, pleaseth it God to set us over particular congregations, and to give us charge of them, that we might redress their sins, And, howsoever that other course be most plausible unto carnall men ; I mean, generall dealing in instruction, admonition, reproof ; &c. as, you shall hear such preachers, that shoot at rovers in their Sermons, much applauded : yet this is the profitable kind of teaching : And therefore, in the primitive Church, were there assistants unto the Minister, in particular congregations, to enquire, and give information of manners ; and, if we had now such as the household of *Cloe*, *1 Cor. 1. 11*. No doubt, we might more profitably, a great deal, converse in our Ministry : that by the way.

Sooth-saying.

First particular mentioned, Sooth-saying ; the word rendred, by skilfull, in originall language ; *præfignatores*, as you would say, jugglers, such as, by deceiving the sence, bring strange things to pass ; but, Synecdochically, under this name, are comprized, all such as exercise any of those divellish arts, that cannot be exercised without contract either secret, or open, with the Devil ; which in one word, we call *Magick* : My purpose is to speak something largely of it ; and so much the rather, because, I see there is some kinde of this divellish art still in practice, amongst our ignorant people : Of it there are sundry branches ; but, they may be all reduced to these two heads.

*Magia* § *Divinatrix.*

*Operatrix.*

The first is that, that is exercised about prediction of contingent events, not out of their causes, but by wayes not sanctified of God ; and this is of two sorts, according as the persons, that use them ; one seemingly joyned with art ; the other vulgar ; these of divers sorts ; briefly, of each.

First, *Pythones*, or *Pythionisse* ; such as by acquaintance with familiar spirits, take upon them to reveale secrets, and

and to foretell things to come ; of such read, *Levit. 20. 27. Dent. 18. 11.* Beloved, I say not, we have such in our own congregation ; but, this, I fear, is too common amongst us, upon every occasion, consulting with such ; if any thing lost, or out of the way, presently, a messenger dispatched, to the cunning man, or the cunning woman : any sickness dangerous, enquiries whether they shall recover ; if a journey undertaken, consult of success, &c. As the Lord saith, *Psal. 50. 18.* *Thou hast been partaker with the adulterer* ; so surely, such are partakers with Soothsayers : And, it were to be wished, that as there are laws wholesome that way provided, so those to whom execution thereof is committed, would put upon them this resolution, and imitate his practice, *2 King. 23. 24.*

And, let us all be admonished to take heed how we joyn with them. 1. See what is noted of *Saul*, before the Lord forsooke him ; he took them away out of the land ; when God had forsaken him, then goes he to consult with a witch, *1 Sam. 28. 7.* 2. The Lord, by strange judgments, hath shewn his dislike of it ; See *2 King. 1. Abaziah was sick* ; and, as it's the fashion of profane men, to be more inquisitive, touching the issue, then to prepare for death ; he sends to *Baal-zebub*, the god of *Eckron*, to enquire, whether he should recover : mark, how the Lord reasons against him. 1. What a sin is this, as if the devil, in *Eckron*, could better resolve, then the God of *Israel*. 2. He tels him, he shall surely dye, and accordingly, it came to pass. 3. *Isa. 8. 20.* The Lord taxing this sin, prescribes us the right means, how we should know, what the success of our enterprises will be ; *To the law, and to the testimony.* When journeyes are so undertaken, we have a promise of blessing ; when otherwise, assure we ourselves, of a curse, though all the devils in hell shall foretel a blessing.

A second sort, are Astrologers, or Starr-gazers ; who, as *Austin* well saith, though under another colour, yet exercise

ercise their art of foretelling things to come, by secret compact with the devil; of these the world was ever full; and, at this day, almost no place empty of them.

These are of sundry sorts. 1. *Genethliaci*, that by calculating Nativities, and searching out the constellations, and aspects of the stars, take upon them to foretel. what should be the manners, state of life, death, &c. of men born under them. 2. Such, as of particular events in businesses undertake to foretel events of things, in their own nature, contingent.

These also not amongst us; yet, I fear, every where consulters with such, That we arme our selves against them, let us see some reasons out of the word of God. 1. Stars made to another end, *Gen. 1. 14.* namely, to measure out dayes and nights, summer and winter. 2. That they make good creatures, malignant. 3. The houses themselves feigned things. 4. They but universal causes, and their influence mixt. 5. *Gemini*, or twins born in one hour, have divers issues. 6. Many other wayes doth the Lord descry their folly, *Isai. 46. Ier. 10.* shewing them to be but heathennish vanity. I might add unto these, those that by dreames take upon them, to foretell things to come: now, it once pleased God, by dreames to reveal particular events; not so now. So those, that by looking on the hand, take upon them to foretell what shall be mens fortune; to these also may be added that same, which they call Necromancy, that is, divination, by consulting with the dead; that is, indeed, with the devil, in the habit, and likeness of the dead: Of all which ye may read, *Deut. 18. 10, 11. Vulgaris*; that which our common people, in superstitious ignorance, observe, of things boding good, or ill; as, how many such observations have they of dismall days; wherein they say, its dangerous to begin any work: That, when a man puts his shooe on the wrong foot, that bodes ill; if the salt fall towards us on the table, ill luck; that, if the staff fall out of the

the hand ; a hare crosse our way ; stumble at the threshold, when we first go out of the house ; or, if the garments be gnawn of the Rats ; of which *Augustine* well notes the answer of *Caro*, an old wizard among the *Romans*. A superstitious observer of such things came to him, as a man full of heaviness ; more grieving, saith he, at the suspicion of ill to come, then for loss present ; and, he would needs know, what hard chance that might bode. To whom the heathen answered merrily ; that is no strange thing, saith he, that Rats should gnaw cloathes ; the wonder had been, if thy cloathes had eat Rats ; so did the heathen deride that folly, and superstition. And it should admonish us Christians, to detest, and abhor such idle superstitious observations, whereby, as much as by any, the devil ruleth in such.

If it be said, that the event, many times, answers to their fear, and expectation. This comes, partly, through Gods judgment upon such ; partly, through Satans desire to bewitch them with such things : God gives them over to these delusions, *that they may believe lies*, because they have not received the love, and obedience of the truth, *2 Theff. 2. 11.*

A second kinde of Sooth-saying, or *Magick*, is operative, that is, consisting in working things strange and beyond conceit ; because, we see not the reason of them ; as we see in the forcerers about *Pharaoh*, and *Simon Magus* ; and the like, perhaps, at this day ; strange cures wrought by bringing enchanted napkins, &c.

Now, first, by natural causes known to Sathan ; as of the lamp burning, in the Temple of *Venus*, without oyl ; a thing that hath a cause in nature ; as *Pliny* of a stone called *Asphaltus*, once set on fire, never quenched. Secondly, by deceiving of the sence, as *Pharaoh's* Wizards, by agility of their nature, removing rods, bringing in Serpents. Thirdly, perhaps also some marvels wrought, true for their nature, but false in their end. Reasons. 1. Gods



judgment upon such, as believe such things, 2. That those that obtain such gifts, might not be too much exalted. 3. To teach us, not rashly to receive doctrines thus commended, but to bring them to the touch. 4. That we might not too much admire this gift; but labour for those rather, that tend to edification, and salvation.

And, in this rank may I also reckon those so rise in every corner; charmers and sorcerers: would God our own congregation were free! which is by procuring of words, to procure speedy help, or hurt; and this is either plain; or covert, some meanes pretendedly used: against which, and all the rest; See *Deut. 18. 10, 11.* Reasons. 1. God cast out the heathen for these. 2. Prophets ordained,

Against all which, these rules must be observed. 1. That they are all exercised, by a secret compact with Sathan: Reason; they have no such force, by nature, divine ordinance, or promise.

*Ob.* Prayers are good; and prevalent.

*Ans.* Made in faith, according to Gods will: But 1. What warrant to pray for cure, without meanes, or, by meanes supernaturall? 2. What reason, why such a prayer, rather then another? 3. See such people, known to be ignorant, vitious, of whom the Lord professeth, he knows none such.

*Ob.* Gift.

*Ans.* Extraordinary gift of healing, now ceased.

*Ob.* Devill doth none good.

*Ans.* Yes, ease, with a desire to hurt.

## VER. 6, 7.

For, I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore , yee sons of Jacob are not consumed : Even from the days of your fathers, yee are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them : Return unto me , and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts : but yee said, wherein shall we return ?

**H**ere, the true cause assigned, why they were not consumed ; because the Lord is unchangeable : And, that it might not seem strange, the Lord should, in mercy, so long forbear them ; he makes it probable, by promising a greater blessing; the summe whereof is this ; that though they had gone astray so long, and were not amended; yet, if now at length they would return, the Lord promiseth, to return to them.

Parts three. 1. An aggravation of the peoples sins. 2. An invitation to repentance. 3. A promise of a blessing ; with a confirmation of it; saith the Lord of Hosts.

*From days of your Fathers.* ] That is, ever since your fathers gave you that ungracious example, and became patterns of disobedience, ye have gone astray.

How prevalent with posterity the example of parents is, especially in evil : I might instance this, in the State of *Ieroboam* ; how many hundreds of years did idolatry continue in his lineage ? And succeeding Kings of his Stock, went a whoring after the calves, in *Dan*, and *Bethel* : as the leprosie of *Gebazi* clave to him, and his posterity ; so the sins of Parents, oft-times, to their children : Heare some reasons of it. The 1. Is, that prones in nature, to imitate examples, either in good, or evil; especially, in children towards Parents ; as we see, in common appearance, in the least of our infants, but newly crept out of their cradle : speeches, gestures, &c. how aptly imitate they

*Observ.*

them ? 2. But specially, this comes to pass, by a judgment of God upon the children, for the fathers transgression, threatned in the second commandment, where he saith, he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children.

If a man demande, how ?

*Ans.* By withholding his grace from them, and giving them over to imitate their fathers sins ; and this, how see we it verified in daily experience ? Popery, how long continues it in families popish !

This should admonish all those, of us, whom the Lord hath made parents, to take heed how we forsake the wayes of our God, and walk after the stubbornness of our own hearts.

Sundry reasons I might give for this. 1. Examples in evill are always prevalent; like leaven, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. how soon it *leavens the whole lump*, we see ; so spreads the infection of an evill example. 2. Me-thinks, the very misery of our children should move us ; God hath made us fathers of their bodies, *Heb.* 12. 9. And very birth is, in its own nature, a blessing ; but yet if we shall bane them by our evill example, better had it been for them, never to be born; how discomfortable is it to parents, to see the shamefull ends of their children, as sometimes on the gibbet ? Can we grieve at this ? Me-thinks, that other misery of them, their eternall damnation, should move us ; murder of bodies odious, much more of soules.

And therefore, beloved, let us all be exhorted, to take heed, how, by a poysonful example we corrupt the souls of our children : be diligent to bring up in the discipline, and information of the Lord ; but be as careful to go before them, in an holy example of practice. Wouldest thou have children reverently use the name of God ? beware how thou prophanest it, by ungodly swearing. Longest thou to wean them from wantonness, and love of pleasure ; and wouldest thou have them, even in youth, to renounce the vanities of life ? Redeem thou the time : me-thinks,

it's

it's unreasonable, that parents should spend weeks and moneths in pleasures, and yet expect restraint from pastime, at the hands of their children : What is this, but to binde heavy burthens, and not to move them with the least of our fingers ?

Secondly, this should teach us to repent of our sins, lest we bequeath unto them, with our goods, our sins also. Riches and possessions, they descend by inheritance, sins also are sometimes hereditary.

Thirdly, this should be admonition unto children, to fortifie themselves against the means so powerful, used by Satan to pervert them : As much as for thine own, grieve for thy fathers sins. I never knew an ungracious father, but he hath left behinde him some pledg of Gods displeasure, amongst his children ; yea though they have seen their fathers sins, and fled from them. I speak now of temporal plagues, by which it pleaseth God to visite the sins of fathers, even in Godly children : And therefore this doe, when God gives thee eyes to see the sins of thy parents, and to fly from them, *Ezek. 18.* Humble thy self, even for thy fathers sins ; See *Dan. 9. Neh. 13. 18.* But, specially, learn to fly from them ; and, for this cause, inform thy self by the word of God, touching thy duty ; and ever set thy self these bounds, to follow thy father, no farther then he follows the Lords commandment ; great is the benefit of such wisdom.

Prescription in error is no feasible plea, in the Court of the Lord. What if thou couldest say, Popery, whordom, covetousness, &c. had continued, in thy lineage, to a thousand descents ? This may aggravate thy sin, but shall not excuse it : And therefore observe, every where, how the Lord adds this, as the aggravating circumstance, *Psal. 95. 10.* *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation,* and, *Act. 7. 51.* *Alwayes, ye have resisted the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.*

And therefore, vain and hellish is that speech of prophane

*Use.*

phane ones amongst us; that because they are able to pre-  
scribe in sinning, therefore procure themselves immunity,  
from the wrath of the Lord. How often hear we those  
speeches from our people? Thus have I alwayes used, and  
my father before me. Now, brethren, put it in some  
other case, in sins against the second table, and see how  
odious a defence this would be; if a man should plead thus,  
in his whordom: thus my father hath used before me; if in  
theft, &c. How should we abhor him? And yet in sins, as  
vain as the excuse is, must go for currant, *Psalm. 78. 8. Be not  
as your fathers, a disobedient, and rebellious generation; and,  
Psalm. 95. 9. in tempting God, and hardenings of heart, Ezek.  
20. 18. Walk not in the ordinances of your fathers, to de-  
file your selves with Idols, and, for this cause, see Zech. 1.  
5. Your fathers, where are they; and remember what  
Peter speaks, 1 Pet. 4. 3. Its enough, if any thing were  
enough, that we have spent the former part of our life in  
vanity, ignorance, &c. To the dishonour of our  
God.*

*Observ. 3.*

Sins never so long continued shut not out from mercy;  
if repentance unfeignedly be performed, *Luk. 19. 42. If  
thou hadst known, in this thy day, &c.* that is, if after all  
this contempt of my word, all this innocent blood of my  
Prophets shed amongst you; if, in this day, thou knewest,  
and wouldst embrace the things that concern thy peace,  
happy wert thou. *Act. 17. 30. The times of this ignorance  
God regarded not, but now he admonisheth every man to re-  
pent.* The reason is, nothing but the endless mercy of  
the Lord, that knows no limits of time, so be it repen-  
tance can be performed. If a man turn, whensoever he  
turn, *he shall live, Ezek. 18. &c.*

*Use.*

Now, mark the forward use, prophane men make of this  
doctrine; sith there is place for pardon, after so long  
continuance in disobedience, vain therefore to take  
thought too soon; a little in old age, or on the death-bed,  
will serve the turn; for, Gods mercy never rejects repen-  
tance



tance from pardon, if, at any time, heartily performed.

Well, beloved, this is true; *But, shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! Rom. 6. 1.* Know we, therefore, that that God who hath promised to give pardon, whensoever repentance is performed, hath not all-ways given repentance, when it's sought for; nay, hath threatened to deny repentance to them, that contemning it offered in the means, respite the day of their conversion unto God: How howls *Esau* for the blessing? How fain would he come to heaven? How bewailes he the loss of Gods favour with tears? *Heb. 12. 17.* and yet obtains it not; and, what saith wisdom, *Prov. 1. 24, 26.* *I called, you heard not; you shall call, but shall not be heard, you shall seek mee early, but not finde mee:* And therefore, mark, what *Esay* saith, *Isa. 55. 6.* *Seek the Lord, while he may be found.*

Is there any time, when the Lord will not be found?

*Ans.* Yes, no doubt; not, but that his mercy is everlasting, but, for that men cannot seek it, when the time is over-slipt, *Ezek. 24. 13.*

¶ Hence then, let us learn, beloved, that perhaps have lived long in our sins, now at the length to seek God, if he may be found of us: And mark, how lovingly the Lord invites us, who have gone astray, &c. a long time; yet return unto mee, and I will turn unto you; as if he had said, yet at the length return, there is hope of mercy, and forgiveness. Beloved, the Lord is the same to us, as he was to *Israel*; and still saith to us, as to them; though ye have long gone astray, yet, if now at length, we could return, there were hope of mercy, and forgiveness.

Let me thus apply it to every of us; and let us all think this spoken to our selves: Thou that art ignorant, and lived thus, all thy life long; if now, at length, thou couldest be admonished to repent, God regards not thy past sins, upon performance of present repentance; so to all other sinners; and mark how the Lord protests, he de-  
lights

lights not in our death, *why will ye dye, saith the Lord ? See Hos. 13. 9.*

And, let not Satan prevail with thee, so far, as to think, as the saying is, too late now ; for, the promise of remission is made to repentance, without all limitation of time, person, or number of offences : and this be assured, out of the word of God ; that howsoever there is no sin so light, but deserves a thousand hells ; yet, none deadly, in the event, but impenitency ; yea, the very sin against the Holy Ghost were capable of pardon, if capable of repentance.

*Observ. 4.*

And, if these things move us not, what shall we say, but as the Lord, by his Prophet ; thy destruction is from thy self, salvation of me ; this only be sure of, that thou bring repentance : What that is, we shall see anon, if we shall first observe, the state of man, during impenitency ; which is the next thing, to be considered in the text.

The State, and condition of impenitency : its nothing else, but a continuall straying from God, as *Ier. 2. 27. They have turned unto me the back ; therefore, 1 Per. 2. ult. We are said, to go astray like sheep ;* and the Scripture every where calleth it, a wandring from God.

And, beloved, let this be holden of all men, whose hearts are not turned, and renewed by the Holy Ghost : Let their civill honesty be never so great ; their zeal and devotion never so fervent, till the heart be changed, all is but, *celer cursus extra viam.*

What learn we hence ? Surely, to take notice of our own misery, whose hearts the Lord hath not yet turned unto him ; we are as men, in a wilderness ; fain, perhaps, we would finde the way to heaven but cannot ; nay, the more we strive, the further, out of the way ; and this is the misery of every impenitent sinner. Then, hence learn all such, to pray, with *Jeremy, Chap. 31. 18, 19, Convert thou us, O Lord, and we shall be converted, Lam. 5. 21.*

Secondly, refuse not the Lords corrections, but embrace them

them, as the Lords love-tokens ; think they all cry unto thee, saying, as *Elisba* to the *Assyrians*, 2 *King*. 6. 19. This is not the way : and look, how thou wouldest rejoyce, if in a dangerous journey thou shouldest have one but to tell thee, thou wert wrong, &c. 2. Because these are, indeed, but dumbe guides ; learn to depend on the Ministry of the word : God hath given us all, in our places, to be guides, and directors unto you ; as *Paul*, *Act*. 26. 18. God sends us to open the eyes, that ye may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Sathan unto God ; See *Act*. 3. ult.

This should admonish every one of us, to be diligent in admonition ; as, *Iam*. 5. 19, 20. Look, what we would do, if we met with a travellour out of the way ; so, &c. especially, strive we to be guides unto them, by our example. *Heb*. 12. 13. *Make strait steps to our feet, lest that which is halting be turned out of the way.*

The nature of repentance : And that is here briefly described, to be a returning unto God ; so every where, *Hos*. 14. 1. *Isa*. 2. 13, *Act*. 26. 18. ; therefore, commonly, the working of it, is called conversion ; and men repenting, are called converts ; as *Nicholas* the convert, or proselyte of *Antioch* ; *Act*. 6. 5.

Let us all try our repentance, by this ; that we may see, whether we have, indeed, repented ; we shall know it by this, our hearty turning unto God.

Use.

Sundry notes there are of it.

First, as preparatives, there are these things. 1. Knowledge of our sins, and of our errors, *Ier*. 3. 12, 13. The Lord thus exhorts the people of *Israel* ; thou disobedient *Israel*, return, saith the Lord, and I will not let my wrath fall upon thee ; how may this be performed ? Know thine iniquity, that thou hast rebelled against the Lord thy God. 2. A second preparative, is shame, *Ier*. 31. 18. I was ashamed ; *Rom*. 6. 21. Whereof ye are now ashamed. 3. A third, is, indignation, 2 *Cor*. 7. 11. I smote upon my thigh,

*Ier. 31. 18.* 4. Enquiry after God; See *Att. 2. 37.* *What shall we do?* And, *Att. 16. 30.* *What must I do?* 5. Deprecation, *Hos. 4. 2.* *Take unto you words, and say, receive us graciously.* 6. Thankfulness, *ibid.* 7. As a sign of all this, holy obedience in all things.

*Observ.*

The last observation, is, the benefit of repentance; I will return unto you.

Sence: The Lord is said to be with us, when he favours us, giving us testimonies, and pledges of his love; *Isa. 54. 7.* To go from us, when he removes the signs of his favour; and, to return unto us, when he restores us the comfortable pledges of his loving-kindness: So that, the meaning is this; return to me, by repentance, I will return unto you; that is, whereas I have now, a long time, withholden the pledges of my love, and by judgments inflicted, have testified my displeasure against you; return to me, I will restore my blessings inward, and outward.

This then the benefit of repentance; it draws down from the Lord his blessings in abundance; it turns away his wrath, brings us the pledges of his love, and favour.

*Use.*

And, let this teach us, that have lost any of the pledges of Gods favour, how we may recover them, namely, by unfeigned repentance. Beloved in Christ, we have long had the Lord averse from us; as is apparent by sundry judgments, which he hath inflicted upon us: he hath withholden the former, and the latter rain; sent us cleanness of teeth, and scarcity of bread; and yet, the Lords wrath is not ceased, *but his hand is stretched out still; Isa. 9. 12.* Wonder we at this? Surely, the cause is this, our not returning unto the Lord by repentance; would we recover the Lords favour? return we then unto him; *let the wicked forsake his own unrighteousness; Isa. 55. 7.* Prove the Lord with this, if he will not open us the windows of Heaven, and pour down his blessings, in abundance; *Isa. 45. 26.*

The like say I of all other pledges of Gods favour, whereof he hath deprived us; health a blessing, peace of conscience,

conscience, comfort in Gods service; would we recover these? We have here the mean. And, see the experiment of it, in sundry examples of the Lords dealing with his people, *Psal. 32. 5. I said, I will confesse my sin, and thou forgavest the punishment of my sin.*

*But, ye said, wherein shall we return?* ] Their justification of themselves. Whence we note; that men deeply engaged in the guilt of sin, are hardly brought to acknowledg their sin: See *Luke 16. 15. You are they, that justify your selves, but God knows the heart; and what is highly esteemed amongst men, is abominable in the sight of God.* Reasons hereof many; but, principally, that very custom of sin, wherein they have long lived, brings blindness upon the Understanding, insomuch, that the grossest sins seem as no sins, after custom in them; See *Eccles. 4. 12.* They know not, that they do evil. 2. This falls by Gods just judgment, giving them up to blindness, as *Rom. 1. 28. a doximus eis*, a minde void of all judgment; so that, they speak evil of good, and good of evil, *Isa. 5. 20.* And therefore, be we exhorted, to take heed of that, which brings this judgment upon us.

*Oserv.*

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VER. 8, 9.

*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed mee: But, ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In Tithes, and offerings: ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed mee, even this whole nation.*

**T**He Lord insisteth in their accusation, by mentioning a new crime; namely, sacriledg, or spoiling of God himself. Where we note. 1. The crime laid to the peoples charge, sacriledg. 2. Their apology, or justification of themselves. 3. The amplyfication of the sin; they did, as none would do; no not Idolaters themselves. 4. The prooffe of it, by instance. 1. *In tithes, and offerings.*



2. By the signes, and effects; Gods curse upon them: Where is also the generality of it, in the subject. *This whole nation.*

*Observ. 1.*

*Will a man rob God?* ] Care of maintaining Gods worship is ingrafted in men, by nature. Will a man spoyl his gods? Though Idolaters err in their apprehension, yet, when they have once conceived a god-head, they are careful to maintain his worship; and conscionably abstain from purloynng any thing that may thither serve. This I might shew in the very heathen themselves: How devout in dolatry? How liberal in contribution, to maintain their divine worship? See what cost the *Egyptians* were at, this way; what store of crafts-men maintained, by Idolatry? How frets *Laban*, when he loseth his gods? So *Micah*, *Judg. 17*. I might be infinite this way: Reason is, the fear of natural conscience this way; which howsoever it erreth in particulars, yet, for the general, holdes the conclusion, that God must be worshipped: And therefore sets up a stock, and a stone, rather than it will be, without a god.

*Use.*

Then, hence learn, what to judg of an Atheist, or a prophane man; he is is far worse than the vilest Idolater: Notes of it are these. 1. Such are abominable in life, *Psal. 14. 1*. 2. Call not upon the name of the Lord, *ib. v. 4*. 3. Light esteem of the pledges of Gods favour, *Heb. 12 15*. as amongst us, of the word of God; whereas, a childe of God, *buyes the truth, and sells it not, Prov. 23. 23*.

*Observ. 2.*

Idolaters, sometimes, (more) conscionable, to preserve the worship of Idols; then some, in the Church, of maintaining the worship of God: See *Israelites, Exod. 32. 3*. Nothing so dear, but they part with, their very Jewels, and earings, to make a Calfe; yea, children themselves made to pass through the fire; and, *Act. 19*. How many crafts-men maintained, by that Idol *Diana*? *Baals* Priests, how cut they themselves with knives, and lancers, *1 King. 18.*

28. Compare us with Papists; see we it not verified? how liberal are they in maintaining the Idolatry, among them practised? What pains take they in Pilgrimages? And none appears empty-handed before the Idoll.

Well, beloved, this shall be the just condemnation of many in our Church; that people doting upon Idols, should be thus zealous for Idolatry, and we so regardless of the worship of God. See but their Priests, how in a blinde zeal, they hazard their lives, to make a Profelyte; shall it not condemn us, that may safely labour settling in truth, and neglect it? How careful they, that no contempt shall be shewn to their Idols? Yet, we, with patience, can endure the horriblemst disgraces offered to the majesty of God; they will rise up in judgment, and condemn us; see *Matth. 12.41*.

Now, before I come to propound the doctrine, it shall not be amiss, a little to handle the question, that here offers it self to be discussed; lest we think, this sin concerns us not.

The question, then, is, whether tenths be, by divine right, belonging to the ministry of the Gospel, for their maintenance?

*Answ.* herein, let me propound the judgment of sundry sound Divines, both wayes, and leave it to Gods people, to be judged of. Divine right, therefore, is doubly understood. 1. Either, that it is directly so, by expresse and precise commandment; or else. 2. By consequent, as having ground in the word of God. The distinction is, *1 Cor. 7.6*. I, not the Lord; the Lord, not I: I have no commandment, but give advice.

Now, this is the judgment of some ancient, and modern Divines: That, by Divine law, the tenths of all fruites, both predial, and personal, are due unto ministers of the Gospel, by those very lawes, that were given concerning the Levites, *Origen, in Num. Hom. 11*. This law of Tythes, he thinks should be observed, according to

*Use.*

Question of Tythes handled.

*Answ.*

the letter. *Hierome*, upon this place, accords with him. *Austin* makes Tythes to ministers, and tribute to *Cæsar*, of equal right. Divines, of late years, accord with them : *Junius* ; Tythes, by all lawes, of God, nature, nations, have been hallowed unto God. *Gaulter*. in *Matth. 23.* & *Zepper de leg. lib. 4. 10.* are peremptory, this way ; and demand, with what reasons it may be proved, that the law was merely ceremonial

Hear their reasons ; because payd before the law, when ceremonies were not in force ; as by *Abraham*, to *Melchizedech* ; this argument concludes not, for, even some ceremonies were in force, before the law of ceremonies given in writing ; as sacrifices, &c.

Better reasons are these.

First, that we are not able to shew, what was in this law ceremonial ; therefore, not so to be esteemed.

Secondly, *Origen* thus. As Gods blessings, under the new Testament, exceed those vouchsafed unto the Jews ; so should our maintenance : This proves thus much only, that as liberal, if not more, is due to the ministers of the Gospel.

Thirdly, greatest reason that of *Junius* ; that by all lawes due ; very light of nature taught Gentiles to hallow the tenth unto God ; whence, may thus be concluded. That what, by instinct of nature, is due, that is perpetual ; for, this is one rule, to discern judicial lawes of common equity, from those of equity particular ; namely, if they be universally received by all nations ; and accord with the word of God : but thus, it's apparent, that in all ages of heathen, they were due.

Fourthly, *Ab absurdo*, it seems not likely, that the Lord providing so liberally for maintenance of Levites ; would leave all uncertain to the devotion of the people, under the new Testament ; but other certainty, is not determined ; *Ergo*.

These reasons are something urgent : And, I must needs profess

profess, to see no certainty of answer to them.

A second opinion is, of them, that hold them to be due, by consequent, from the law of God ; though no direct law given concerning them. As, 1. From the command of the Magistrate, to whom they imagine the Lord to have left determining of particulars, only with this generall ; so it be competent. 2. By vertue of consecration that way, either by vow, or other wholesome ordinance : And thus they think them due unto us ; so that he shall be guilty of sacriledg, that withholdes, or alienates them ; *Gal. 3. 15.* A (mans) testament no man abrogates ; *Prov. 20. 25.* *Its a destruction, to devoure Holy things ; and after the vow, to enquire.*

A third sort think them utterly unlawfull, to be either paid, or exacted ; in as much, as it was a part of ceremoni- all law ; and, for this cause, amongst others, abandon soci- ety with our Church, because, as they say, we judaize in maintaining our Ministers, by tithes : These need rather pity, in respect of their zeal ; then confutation of their judgment : It being a principle holden, amongst all Di- vines ; that judiciall lawes, especially, when there appears not some evident cause why they should concerne only the State of the *Jewes*, may justly be revived in Christian Common-wealths ; nay, that Common-wealths are best governed, that come nearest that plat-forme.

What my judgment is, I will forbear to propose ; pro- fessing only an inclination this way ; that they are due, by divine right : For some reasons before specified.

To leave these [ Uncertainties : ] See what the Scrip- ture (certainly) teacheth, touching maintenance of the Mi- nistry.

First of all, that there is maintenance due unto them, for their work sake ; *1 Cor. 9.* 1. From common equity, *vers. 7.* 2. From voice of the Law ; the ox not muzzed, *vers. 9.* 3. Spirituall things are ministred, there- fore, temporall things may be reaped. 4. *A pari,* they that

*Observe.*

that serve at the Altar, live by the Altar. 5. *A sanctione Christi*, God hath ordained, &c. *vers. 14.*

2. That this must be a liberall maintenance, *1 Tim. 5. 17, 18.* double honour; *Gal. 6. 6.* Made partaker of all his goods; *1 Tim. 3. 1.* How, else, given to hospitality? due from all that partake in benefit of instruction: Again, this the word teacheth morally; that magistrates are to be obeyed, in things lawfull, for conscience sake, *Rom. 13. 5.*

3. That things consecrated unto Gods service, may not be alienated to other uses, out of case of necessity, *Prov. 20. 25. Gal. 3. 15.*

Out of all which, I think this conclusion ariseth; that Tythes (of England) are due by Gods Law, to the maintenance of the Ministry; if not directly, yet, by consequent; if not, in *specie*, yet in the *equivalent*: Whence, this conclusion will soundly follow; that, to detain any thing belonging to maintenance of the Ministry, is Sacriledg; let it be coloured with never so goodly pretences.

*Use.*

Now, beloved, where should I begin to reprove? First, those ingrossers of Ministers maintenance, by impropriations; &c. I stand not now to dispute the question; this only know, things once consecrated, are the Lords, *Levit. 27. 30, 31.* and may not, for ever, be alienated. 2. This holden by all Divines; that so to alienate, as that there be not a liberall maintenance for the Minister, for all works of his calling, is generally holden an accursed practice: And, what maintenance is this, *Micah's* allowance? *Judg. 17.* A, Livery dyet, and ten shekells of silver; surely, the platform I think was first taken from that Idolater: But, beloved, let such men consider, how many souls perish, for lack of Ministers: I know what they say, blame the law; *Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Gal. 6. 7.* There is a law of equity should guide every christian, and they should be laws unto themselves.

*Ob.* Ministers covetous.

*Ans.*



*Ans.* So, indeed, they say, who are deeplyest engaged this way ; but, it will be hard to prove, that desire of a competency, comes under the censure of covetousness.

Secondly, guilty of this sin also, are all those that detain any thing due, from the maintenance of the worship of God : I know it will be said, I am now in my own harvest. But, sith it pleaseth God, to give so just occasion ; judg, I pray you, in charity ; that I preach of conscience, not of commodity.

And, this let me say, from my own, and other mens experience ; men most liberall to other profane uses, think any thing too much, that is given to the Ministry.

What should be the cause of it ? Surely. 1. That root of all evill, covetousness. 2. Lack of feeling sweetness, and comfort, by the Ministry ; surely, if Spirituall things were reaped, temporall things would flow, of own accord. But, to what cause should we impute the scant-handedness of men professing of Religion, and the fear of God ; that they, notwithstanding, should so niggardly contribute ; and paying never so little, look for a cap, and courtesie from the Minister ?

Let me add some Reasons, for exhortation. 1. Its an honouring of God, *Prov. 3. 9.* 2. It argues, that we have tasted sweetness in the word, and are, indeed, partakers of spirituall things. 3. Consider but the example of very Idolaters, this way ; as of papists, at this day : and, let it shame us Christians. 4. Detaining brings Gods curse, *Prov. 20. 25. 5.* Mark, what the Lord here speaks, it brings down scarcity, and famine upon the land.

*Ye are cursed with a curse* ] The punishment ; the generallity of it ; obstinacy of the Jews, notwithstanding thus afflicted.

Common sins draw down common judgments ; All partake in sin, all therefore in punishment. Hence, that exhortation, *Rev. 18. 4. Go out, lest thou partake of her plagues.*

*Observ.*

What doth this teach us? but as Solomon saith, *Prov. 1. 10.* If sinners entice us, not to consent unto them.

*Quest.* What is then to be done? Must we leave the world?

*Ans.* There may be a just dwelling among sinners, and wicked men. 1. If there be mourning for their sins, *Ezek. 9. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 8.* 2. If we partake not with them, any way, by consent, countenance-giving, fellowship in evil, *Eph. 5. 11.* 3. If there be a reproofe of their evil, within bounds of our calling. 4. An hindering, within bounds of our calling, *Neh. 13. Josh. 24.*

*Observ.*

*Yet ye have robbed me.]* Note here the amplyfication of the sin; yet ye spoyle me. This is ever an aggravating circumstance in sin, to persist in practice of sin, when Gods judgments are upon us, *Neh. 13. 18.* Yet, ye encrease the wrath: *Ex. 9. 13.* After all this, *Jer. 5. 3.* Thou hast smitten them, but they have not sorrowed.

*Use.*

And this the common sin of these times. God hath made his plagues wonderful amongst us; and, though his arrows have passed amongst us, yet, who hath regarded to enter into his heart, and once to say, what have I done? *Jer. 8. 6. &c.*

#### VER. 10.

*Bring ye all the Tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hostes, if I will not open you the windowes of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it, &c.*

**I**N the former verse, was a reproofe of sacriledg. We have here a duty prescribed, as a remedy, for removal of that curse of God now upon them. Wherein consider we. 1. The duty, *Bring all the Tithes into my store-house.* 2. Reasons perswading the duty. 1. Abundance promised.

promised. 2. Means of their penury removed. 3. That all nations shall call you blessed.

For the duty, see we, 1. What it is. 2. Form of it.

*Bring ye all my Tithes* ] For this was the ordinance of God, partly, to free the Levites from distractions; and partly, to prove the fidelity, and willingness of the people, this way, that they should bring the Tithes to the place appointed; a store-house provided for that purpose, *Deut. 14. 28, 29.*

Whereas the Lord propounds this mean to remove his wrath; we may observe, what course to take, when Gods hand is upon us; namely, to give our selves to practice of those duties, for omission whereof, Gods wrath is come out against us: and this propounded, *Isa. 1. 16.* So, in *Moses, Exod. 4. Isa. 9. 12, 13.*

*Of serv.*

Reason is, because that cause remaining, the effect must needs stay upon us: The Lords wrath is compared to a fire, *Isa. 10. 17.* Wicked men, they are as the fewel; impenitency as the bellows, that blow it, till it have utterly consumed.

This then let us do, when as we see the tokens of Gods wrath gone out against us; every one, as *Jeremy, Lam. 3. 48.* Search and try his wayes, and turn unto the Lord. Beloved, we have seen, and do see the infallible evidences of Gods wrath upon us; and just cause have we to fear, lest greater plagues, than these, hang over our heads. Surely, as many evidences of it we see still before our eyes, as any nation; how the Lord hath gathered his Saints from evil to come, *Isa. 57. 1.* How stubbornly, and securely, we walk still towards our God, who seeth not? Beloved, these are the fore-runners of some heavy judgment. Would we prevent it? Remove the cause of it, that is, every man his own sins: What duties we have been slack in, let us learn, now, zealously to practise. And, to see the behaviour of our people, in all these judgments, it's strange. Some

*Use.*

little wonderment we can make, how it should come to pass, that the Lord should be thus incensed against us; never free from one judgment, or another; One while sword; another while, pestilence; another while, famine; and one blames this cause, another that: Poor, they cry out, it comes from wealthy, and their hearts are hard: Rich blame the poor, and it's a plague for them; few or none, enters into his heart, to say, *what have I done*, that all this wrath is come upon me? *Ier. 8. 6.* Whereas, if we would not flatter our selves. how many causes of these, and far greater judgments, should we find in our selves? Oaths, drunkenness, abusing Gods graces to wantonness, contempt of the word, &c. And, I wish there were such hearts in us, this to do; how should we finde the Lord true in the proof; to remove his judgments, and wrath from us! and, till this be done, never look we for peace, *Levit. 26. 21, &c. 2 King. 19. 22.*

*Observ.*

Again, note here, how the Lord would have us behave our selves, in those things, that serve to maintain the worship of God: Bring all, &c. Two things he commendeth unto us. 1. Voluntariness. 2. Faithfulness.

*Bring*] Even without craving: *All*] nothing detained: When the tabernacle was to be erected, mark, what charge the Lord gives touching it; and what manner of offerers thereto he required, *Exod. 25. 2.* of every man, whose heart giveth it freely; and, *35. 5, 21, 22.* the *r* practice followed, in both kinds, *Exod. 36. 5, 6.* So plentiful, that they were fain to restrain bringing; See also *2 Chr. 31. 5, 6.* Herein, especially, that hath place; *The Lord loves a chearfull, and liberall giver; 2 Cor. 9. 7.*

But, ah brethren, what times are we fallen into, under the Gospall! As an eminent Divine hath well observed, our blessings are more, in the meanes of salvation, revelation, cleanness, burthen less; &c. And yet, how unwillingly comes, even a little to the painfulllest Minister? And those, that upon a kinde of conscience, pay other duties, think

think all lost, that goes to the maintenance of the Ministry; and that with such repining, as if that were money, of all other, worst bestowed: And secondly, scant-handedness, this way, how is it seen in the best? that we need not wonder at it, in those, that never tasted the sweetness of the word of God: at the building of the tabernacle, they were fain to proclaim a *sufficet*; and 2 *Chro.* 31. 5, 6. They brought it in by heapes, when *Hezekiah's* commandment went forth: But, I conclude this point, with the saying of the Apostle, *Gal.* 6. 8. *He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reape corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reape life everlasting.*

Follows now the reason, Gods promise; which is not barely propounded, but in a Rhetoricall permission: Prove me now with this; as if he had said, many means you have assayed, to remove my judgments, and to supply your penury, and all to no purpose; and, It may be, you think, guessing by second apparent causes, that this is impossible, at least unlikely; well, prove me with this; &c. make tryall of this one meanes, for recovery of my favour.

Two things. 1. What the Lord permits to his people, prove me. 2. Wherein, or how they should take experiment of him.

*Prove me*] Make but a tryall, and if the event answer not, then say, I have forgotten my truth: This kinde of speech is not frequent in Scripture; some thing like it, is that of *David*, *Psal.* 34. 8. Where, having set out the notable, and to wicked men incredible priviledges of the Children of God, at length, he thus speaks; *tast and see how gracious the Lord is*, and you shall finde it true, that *blessed is the man, that trusteth in him.*

And, beloved, if those wretches, that make a mock at the counsell of the poor, because God is his hope; and cannot be perswaded of the sweetness, that is in religion, would but make triall a little: if they would but make proof, how comfortable the service of God is, how

*Observe.*



happy were they ! *David, Psal. 4. 7.* Speaking of the joy the wicked had in earthly things, professed ; that he found far more comfort and joy, in the service of God, then they had, or could have, *in the encrease of their corn, wine, and oyle :* And, if those sluggardish fooles amongst us, that have a price put into their hands to get wisdom, but have no heart, would consider this ! They think it is too late to learn ; their wits, and memories, are grown dull : Oh yet, do but prove the Lord ; wait at the posts of his doors, hear, read, confer, pray God, prove him a little ; he hath promised, that *they that seek wisdom shall finde, Prov. 2. 4.* Prove him, and see, whether thou finde him not full as good as his promise.

There is an unlawful, and damnable proving, and trying of the Lord ; we call it commonly, tempting God. It is, when men presumptuously make needless experiments of the truth of God, especially in his threatnings. The Lord hath given charge unto the people of *Israel*, that they should, on the evening of the Sabbath, provide for that might suffice, on the Sabbath ; and told them, that on the Sabbath, they should finde none ; notwithstanding, there went out some, *Exod. 16. 27.* To gather on the Sabbath day: they would try, whether the Lord would be as good, as his word. So likewise, a charge he gave, that if the manna they gathered for every daies provision, they should keep none, till the morning ; yet, were there some, that would needs reserve, for experiment, to see what would come of it ; it was full of worms, and stank. He had likewise given strict charge unto the people, that they should take heed of doing any thing, presumptuously, against the Lord ; and told them, they should dye ; there goeth out one, notwithstanding, *Num. 15.* To gather sticks : he would try what the Lord would do to him ; and the Lord caused him to be stoned.

And, of this kinde of presumptuous proving the Lord, the world is full. The Lord hath threatened to him that encreaseth

encreaseth his riches by usury, and unjust gain, that he shall lay it up for another : yet, mark, notwithstanding this be exemplified still, in the course of Gods providence, they will prove the Lord; and they will see, whether goods so gotten may not be permanent. So likewise, that the companion of Drunkards shall be cloathed with raggs, how often see we it exemplified ? and yet, how many are there, that presumptuously will herein prove the Lord ! The Lord hath taught us, that the ordinary means to come by faith, is, by the word of God ; and that prayers are all cursed, and abominable, when that is despised, *Prov. 28. 9.* Yet mark, how many, presumptuously, make trial of the Lord; and they, forsooth, will see, whether, by other means, they cannot be saved. He hath threatened, that he that deferrs repentance, when it's offered, shall never come to repentance, *Ezek. 24. 13.* Yet, how many be there, that herewith prove the Lord ! they will put it to the trial, and see whether repentance may not come, on the death-bed. Beloved, this is a fearful provoking sin ; and they, that thus prove him, shall finde him, in the prooffe, a terrible God to them.

What then is this proof of the Lord, here permitted unto the people of God ? It is, when a man, in faith of Gods promise, useth those means prescribed for his comfort, expecting, by hope, the performance of what is promised.

And it hath in it, three things. 1. A promise of God, to rest on. 2. Walking in the wayes, that God hath prescribed. 3. Expectation of performance, in use of the means. Or, briefly thus ; when a man using the means prescribed, waits for the performance of what is promised : as, in this place, here is. 1. Promise of plenty. 2. The means, repentance. 3. Faith, in use of the means prescribed.

Now, when a man fails in any of these, he proves God, indeed ; but, that proving is tempting : As for example, when

when a man throwes himself into an unnecessary danger, he hath no promise of protection; as the devil tempted Christ to do, *Matth. 4. 6.* He may make experiment of Gods truth, so doing; but indeed, is a tempter of God. So likewise, when a man having holy means prescribed, neglects to use them; as, having meat, looks to be fed, as *Elias* was, by Angels, that he may prove God; this also is tempting of God.

See we the means, with this, now prescribed; the observation will be.

*Observ.*

A man, that would have a comfortable experience of Gods truth in his promises, must tye himself precisely to those means, that the Lord prescribes, *Act. 27. 31.* The Apostle had received a promise from God, for preservation of him, and his company, in the shipwrack; they seeing the ship like to break, begin by means (not prescribed) to provide for themselves; but the Apostle tels them, that unless they tarry in the ship, they cannot be safe.

*Use.*

And, let it teach us, to walk in Gods high-way, if we look for comfortable deliverance, out of any troubles.

Reproved those that neglect the means vouchsafed; as, how many both in temporal, and spiritual things, there be, that fain would be saved; but means of their own they seek; at least, neglect use of means, by God prescribed, and vouchsafed unto them.

Secondly, such, as in dangers, and extremities, betake themselves to means of their own, that have no warrant from God. As, how many in these dayes of scarcity, to pilfering, and stealing, prophanation of the Lords Sabbath &c. Though the Lord? hath often protested, that obedience is the best means of preservation, *Dent. 28.*

*If I will not open the Windows of Heaven*] See *Gen. 7. 11. 2 King. 7. 2.* Meaning, that the Lord would give them plentiful means, and a plentiful blessing with them.

Where, note the power of repentance, how prevalent

it is with God, to draw down his blessings upon us : it turns the greatest penury into abundance. See this, first, in feigned repentance, by *Ahab* : it respits Gods vengeance, though but counterfeit, 1 *King*. 21. ult. In *Nineveh*, Who knows, saith the King, whether the Lord will repent of the evil, and return, and leave a blessing behinde him ? See *Jon*. 3. 10. See *Psal*. 106. in the example of the *Israelites*.

Beloved, let us prove God with this. It hath pleased God, a long time, to follow us with his judgments, in this Kingdom ; as, *Amos* 4. And what marvel ? *Isa*. 9. 12, 13. If the Lords wrath be not ceased, but his hand stretched out still ; *fish the people turneth not to him that smites them ; nor seek the Lord of Hostes* :

Use.

Now, beloved, that we could be perswaded, by repentance, to seek the Lord, and would prove him, a while, with this, as we have provoked him by our sins ; so, we would prove him, a little, with repentance ; how easily could the Lord turn our penury, -into abundance ? It was a prophane speech of the Prince, 2 *King*. 7. 2. *Though the Lord should open the windowes of Heaven, this thing could not come to pass*. And, as prophane is the thought of our people ; because, perhaps, we see no means : mens hearts (we say) are hardend, &c. But, in whose hand are the hearts of men ? How moved he the hearts of the people, that led *Israel* captive, to pity them ? *Psal* 106. 46. See Gods favour to *Israel*, in the eyes of the *Egyptians*, that before had oppressed them ; neither is his hand shortened. Prove the Lord with this.

Observe again, secondly, how plenty, and scarcity, are all the works of God ; be the means what they will : as scripture abundantly evidenceth. *He turneth the rock into a spring ; he maketh a fruitfull land barren ; he maketh the earth iron, and the Heavens bras*. Again, he opens the windows of Heaven ; he brought grafs-hoppers upon *Egypt* ; he calls for a winde, and sweeps all away.

Observe.

Use.

away. He sends the Canker-worm, and grass-hopper, to devour, as his instruments, to be avenged of our sins; it's he that rebukes them, &c. *Amos 3.6.* No evil, to wit, of punishment, but the Lord doth it.

Now, this serves for the reproof of those Naturallists, who ascribe all things to Nature, and never look up to the God of Nature, whose will these second causes fulfill, and accomplish; dearth, and plenty, with them, all come from Nature; drought, and immoderate rain; but, who sends the drought? who rain? Is it not the Lord? *Elias* prays for drought, it's given; prays for rain, it's given also, *Iam. 5. 17, 18.* So, in these inundations of late, the windes observed, but God not seen in them; though, as *David* saith, he brings the windes out of his treasures.

Well, beloved, let us learn to hear the rod, and him that smites, *Mic. 6. 8.* Surely, of all these means we may say, as *Elias* of the still voyce; the (Lord) is in them, *1 King. 19. 12.*

And, what else, should be the reason, that the same causes have not allwayes the same effects, but that the first cause tempers, and over-rules them? Nature ever works constantly, and to the utmost of her power. Natural faculties are applyed, and brought to action, by the power of God. And therefore take we the Prophets advice, *Hos. 6. 1.* as the Lord hath smitten us; so to him let us return, it's he alone, that can heal us.



VER. II.

*And I will rebuke the devonour for your sakes,  
&c.*

**N**Ote we here, by how many mean instruments God can take vengeance of his people; caterpillars, and cankerworms, creatures of no great power; yet see, how the Lord by them, can avenge him of his people. How dealt the Lord with the *Egyptians*, by grasshoppers, frogs, lice, flies, haile, &c.

*Obser.*

And, let us learn hence, to take heed, how we provoke the eyes of the Lords glory; seeing by the meanest of his creatures, he can thus be avenged of us: thou that boastest of strength of body, and promist to thy self long life; how soon can the meanest and vilest spider, kill thee? &c.

*Use.*

VER. 13, 14, 15.

*Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet yee say, what have we spoken so much against thee? Yee have said, it is vain to serve God, &c.*

**T**He crime laid to their charge, stout words against God: In them consider the blasphemies themselves. 1. Vain to serve God. 2. Proud blessed. Arguments, whereby they prove it. 1. From their own experience, what profit have we had? The interrogation denies; that is, none at all. 2. From the present prosperity of the wicked; they are exalted, and delivered.

Mark here, how one sin draws in another, till man come to extremity of profaness; even to blasphemy of the name of God, and to utter renouncing of his service. This might be instanced, in sundry particulars: *Judas* har-

*Obser.*

boured covetousness; what villany brought that him unto ? even to betray innocent blood.

The reason whereof is this; Gods judgment upon them; giving them up to hardness of heart, *Rom. 1. 28.* Which also we see verified, in common experience.

Use.

Let it admonish us, to take heed how we harbour any one sin in our hearts, yea even the least impenitency: Sins are linked together in a chain; no one enters, but, it draws its fellows after it, and enclines to the greatest enormities: Yet, its strange to see how many throw off this admonition, as needless, in respect of gross sins; as *Hazael, 2 King. 8. 12, 13.* When *Elisba* tells him, with what cruelty he should use the people of God; what, is thy servant a dogg, that I should do this thing? so, many of us: But, consider we. 1. How strongly we are enclined to every sin, by nature; not blasphemy, not murder, not Atheisme excepted: that any of us are not as vile, as the vilest Atheist, it proceeds from Gods grace restraining us. 2. That we have no other bridle, but the grace of God, *Gen. 20. 6.* I kept thee: and, longer then this Divine bridle curbs us, no hope of stay; man, saith *Job*, is, in his nature, born as the wilde asses colt in the wilderness; he drinks iniquity like water; when that bridle is gone, whether run we not? even to those sins, that nature teacheth, to be abominable. 3. Consider, into whose power we come, when the Lord gives us over, even to the power of Sathan, *Eph. 2. 2, 3.* that works in the children of disobedience; he must needs go, we say in the proverb, whom the divell drives. 4. How sins themselves fret like cankers, *2 Tim. 2. 17.* and encrease still to more ungodlinefe; *evill men, and deceivers, grow worse and worse, 2 Tim. 3. 13.*

Pray we, therefore, to God continually, to put his fear into our hearts, that we may never depart away from him, *Ier. 32. 40.* And, if any of us have fallen, make haste to rise, not by coloured, but by hearty repentance. Adultery drew *David* to murder; if *David*, what stay have we of our selves?

Let

Let us next consider the words themselves ; *its vain to serve God* ] See the like profane speech of Atheists, *Iob. 21. 15.* Nor may we much marvel at this, in profane men ; for, its that, that hath assaulted the dear servants of God ; *David* confesseth so much of himself, *Psal. 73. 13, 14.*

What are the meanes, whereby the devill insinuates this thought into our hearts ? 1. It is the present afflicted State of Gods children, betwixt whom, and wicked men, we can see no difference, in externall things ; nay rather, we see affliction the portion of Gods children ; outward prosperity granted to the ungodly. 2. Another cause is, that we walk by sence, and not (as we ought) by faith, *1 Cor. 5. 7.* And because, we sensibly feel not Gods love, therefore think, he is not gracious unto us, nor regards us ; and, how many times, upon this ground, look we back to *Egypt* ? 3. Too much admiring the things of this life : The garishness of honour, and wealth, and pleasures, it so dazzles our eyes, that we think them, the only happy men, that enjoy them ; our selves miserable for nothing else, but for that we want them.

Let us then see a little, what profit there is in religion, and the service of God heartily performed ; 2. How we may arme our selves, against this temptation.

See we, then, the benefit of the service of God : this is of two sorts : 1. The one seen and felt, in this life. 2. The other, in another life ; *1 Tim. 4. 8.* The benefits of this life are, either outward, or inward : Outward so free, and warrantable use of all the creatures of God, *1 Cor. 3. 21.* And, what a benefit is this ? We use to say of our own ; though but little, yet, its mine own, and I may comfortably enjoy it ; not so the case of wicked men. 2. A second benefit, is, protection in common calamities, See *Psal. 37. & 91.* And, howsoever it please God to chastise particuler disobedience, to take them away, sometimes, with others ; yet then failes he not of his promise,

but turns into better. 3. A third benefit is peace, *Gal. 6. 16.* And that. 1. With God, *Rom. 5. 1.* Thus they may assure themselves, in all hatred of men; yet, God loves them, and is favourable unto them. 2. Peace with themselves, in their own conscience; that, whereas the wicked and ungodly, are alwaies, as the raging sea, *Isai. 57. ult.* and no peace unto them; Gods children have peace in their conscience. 3. Peace with all creatures, in Heaven, and Earth; the very Angels wait on them, *Heb. 1. ult.* Devils themselves cannot hurt them. 4. Add unto these that which, indeed, is the true riches, *Iam. 2. 5.* & *Luk. 12.* Plenty of knowledg; contentment in all States, *1 Tim. 6. 8.*

Now, beloved, if a man should consider these unspeakable joys, that God hath provided for his children; who can say, that it is in vain to serve the Lord? Is it nothing, that a man hath right to all creatures? Nothing, to be preserved in common calamities? Nothing, to have Gods favour, peace of conscience, which wicked themselves would, sometimes, redeem with all the world? Nothing, that God hath called us to a lively hope, to an inheritance immortal? *1 Pet. 1. 4.* Let them so speak, that have no taste of these things; Gods children are otherwise minded.

Now see among our selves, against these temptations; as 1. afflictions.

*Ans.* Mark first, their benefit present; how do they, being sanctified, purge, and subdue corruption? 2. They give us plentiful experience of Gods favour, *Rom. 5. 2 Cor. 12.* 3. That intomparable crown of glory, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* See *Moses, Heb. 11. 25.*

*Ob.* This we alwaies see not.

*Ans.* Walk by faith, not by feeling. God sometimes seems to hide himself from us, (see *Iob 13.*) and that for our good; for, hereby he magnifies faith, and returns to us with new favours.

2. Glory of riches.

*Ans.*

*Ans.* See but their vanity; how little avail they, in the day of Gods wrath! *Prov.* 11. 2. and, withal, consider, how to the wicked, they become occasions of many foul sins, and so of heavier condemnation; bringing with them also, in the mean time, much disquietness; riches being often reserved for *the hurt of the owners.*

3. We have deserved better.

*Ans.* Consider what we have deserved, indeed, and we shall see; it's not the least mercy, but the heaviest wrath. And, even in the best service, there is some imperfection, &c. And thus may we arm our selves, against this temptation.

*What profit?* Mark here the nature of a carnal man; he measures religion, by his belly; and profit is the line, that he walks by; and that is the best religion with them, that brings greatest advantage in the things of this life: See *Job* 31. 15. *Ier* 44. 17, 18. *1 Tim* 6. 5. The reason whereof is, nothing, but earthly-mindedness, *Phil* 3. 19. *Their belly is their God, they mind earthly things.*

Let me apply it to the times: And let us but hear the common censure, that worldlings pass of religion: Look, say they, and see what kinde of men they are, that are the forwardest in religion; poor raskal people, beggars, in comparison; right, as the Pharisees, *Job* 7. 48. Now, brethren, though that be not generally true; for, it pleaseth God to shew his power, and, though not many rich, and mighty, *1 Cor* 1. 26. Yet some; and, see how rich these others are in faith, *Jam* 2. 5.

And here, let us a little see, why it pleaseth the Lord to keep his children so low, in this life. Reasons are. 1. To mortifie, and abate their sins: Thou blestest thy self, in the multitude of thy riches; Oh, how blessed were it for thee, if thou hadst less wealth, and more grace! And, what happiness should the Lord do thee, if he would deprive thee of that abundance, that steals away thine heart from God! 2. To justify their sincerity, that it may

*Observ.*

*Use.*

be



be seen, they serve not God, for commodity, *Iob* 1. 9. 3. To teach them, and us all, that the hope of a Christian, is not in this life, *1 Cor.* 15. 19. 4. To magnifie the power of his grace, in their weakness, and infirmity.

Secondly, how many are there, that even for this, refuse to embrace religion; because, they see, religion allows them not their benefits. They could be content to be religious, as the young man, in the Gospel; but, they love not the conditions, such strictness; that a penny must not be gotten, but with good conscience. Now mark, my brethren, *Mar.* 10. 30. that Christ hath promised all that may be expedient; and wouldest thou have wealth that should hinder thy salvation? 2. Consider, that if thou lose all, yet God gives contentment; and that is a benefit, which no worldling can attain. If thou see but the carking and toyl, that such earth-worms are put unto, me-thinks, thou shouldst never envy them their plenty, with such conditions. 3. Observe what a company of noysome lusts they pierce themselves through withal. 4. *With the Lord are durable riches*, *Prov.* 8. 18.

Lastly, such also as for the exchange of things in these dayes of the Gospel, run back, in their affections, to Popery. As the *Israelites*, when they came to the wilderness, and were but a little pinch'd with hunger, cry out; it had been better for them, to have sitten by the flesh-pots, and garlick, and onyons of *Egypt*. And, how many such, that wish for Popery, for no other end, then that they might again enjoy the old plenty, and happiness of all things.

And now, we call the proud happy. That is, they thought those that walked in the stubbornness of their hearts, against God, more happy, than they. Reason, because they were delivered, and freed from afflictions. Shall I need to say, This is the state and opinion of our people?

people. How do they applaud the state of ungodly men, in respect of their outward prosperity? And, how happy think they such, as abound with things of this life, though wholly destitute of the graces of Gods Spirit? yet look but upon such a professour, you shall see him less friended, less honoured, and living at less hearts ease. Now, that we fall not into this blasphemy; let us see, a little, the reason, why it pleaseth God, thus to deal with ungodly men? And, ye shall finde, he doth it, for this end.

First, to fat them *against the day of slaughter*, as we are wont to put our cattel destin'd to the slaughter, into the fattest, and fairest pastures, *Prov. 1. 32. Ease slayeth the foolish;* see also, *Psal. 37. and 73.*

Secondly, to teach his own children, not too much to admire the things of this life, which they see the very wicked themselves may be, and are partakers of: Who would dote upon those things, which when a man hath, make him, never a whit, the more happy; yea, perhaps, further, through abuse, his condemnation?

Thirdly, to aggravate their judgment, when as by so many blessings of God, they have been allured to obedience; and have had so plentiful means of doing good, and yet have done none.

Fourthly, therefore doth the Lord put such power into their hands, that he may, by them, exercise, and chasten the disobedience of his children, *Isa. 10. 5.* They are Gods hangmen, and executioners.

Now, for the second part, that, in all these things, they are not happy, what need I stand long to prove? Pre-supposing them to be such, as are here described.

First of all, it is an argument, that the Lord hath utterly rejected them from his love; for a man to prosper, and to be delivered, continuing his sin, *Hosb. 4. 14.* Among many curses, this is one of the most grievous, when the Lord gives a sinner prosperity in his sin; this hardens the heart, and makes them please themselves in their wicked-

ness : Therefore, see the contrary promised unto Gods children, *Psal.* 89. 31, 22. Therefore, saith *David*, *blessed is the man, whom thou chastenest alwaies, and teacheest in thy way*, *Psal.* 94. 12. & *1 Cor.* 11. 32. *We are chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the World ; and, a thousand times better is this state, then his, whose sins the Lord winks at, without chastisement : And therefore, envy them not in this, whilest their hearts are fleshed in their sins,* 2. Consider what *Iob* hath ; the rejoycing of the hypocrite is but short ; & *Iob* 21. 3. The feares, wherewith they are perplexed, *Dan.* 5. 4. Have no assurance of pardon of sins ; wherein, notwithstanding, blessedness, indeed, consisteth, *Psal.* 32. 1. 5. Have their portion in this life, and only here, *Mat.* 6. 5.

*Yea, they that tempe God are even delivered*] Let us, a little, see, what it is : It is, generally, to make needles experiment of the truth, power, mercy, justice of God.

Some try his clemency ; some, his patience, *Psal.* 78. Some, his justice, by presumptuous sins ; some, his power, in needles dangers ; some, his wisdom, whether God will assist, on the sudden : Each of these a step to, or a degree of this sin. And, in some, in this place, its nothing else ; but, when a man presumptuously sins, as it were daring the Lord to take vengeance ; See *Num.* 15. The law of God, and execution of it.

*Even they are delivered*] Men of extreamest impiety are, sometimes, prospered ; See *Psal.* 37. & 73. *Ier.* 12. 1. &c.

But, marvell not at this, nor be discouraged, when thou seest it : It hath, indeed, for lack of due consideration of the reasons thereof, much disquieted Gods Children. But yet, secondly, let none bless himself in his courses, for that he hath outward prosperity ; very godles men, sometimes, partake it.

Observ.

Use.

## VER. 16.

*Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkned, and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*

**I**N the words before, is set down the blasphemy of the wicked. In the words now read, is expressed the behaviour of those, that fear God: they spake. 2. The blessedness of them that fear him; they are. 1. Gods peculiar. 2. Fatherly clemency promised them; and, the use, and event of it; containing a confutation of the blasphemy of the wicked; men shall return, and put difference; &c.

In the barrenest times of the Church of God, the Lord hath some that fear him, and that stand up to justify his truth, against the blasphemies of the wicked: Experience of all times, shews it; *Gen. 6. 12.* When all flesh had corrupted their wayes; there was found a *Noah* upright before God, and a Preacher of righteousness: In the days of *Elijah*, *1 King. 19. 18.* Seven thousand reserved; *Isai. 6. 13.* A tenth; in the days of our Saviour, when all was overgrown with superstition, were found *Zachary*, and *Elizabeth*, *Luk. 1. 5. 6.* *Rev. 3. 4.* A few names, that had not defiled their garments. In the very heat of Antichrists raign, two witnesses; *Rev. 11. 3.* A few that stood up for maintenance of Gods truth, in times of *Arius*, when the whole world groaned, to see it self become an *Arian*. *Athanasius* raised up to maintain Gods truth. Reason, that his Covenant, and promise may stand. His promise, and Covenant made with the Church, is perpetuity; and howsoever, it be not tyed to any certain place, nor, in all times, hath like number; yet, some in all times, in some places, stirred up, to maintain his truth.

*Observ. I.*

*Rom. 3.* Though some unfaithful, and deale untruly in the Covenant, yet God faithfull, *vers. 7.* *Mal. 3. 6.* *I am the Lord, and change not, and ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.* A second reason is, because his worship must be everlasting, and without interruption upon earth; he will have alwaies some to worship him, in spirit, and in truth: A third reason, for a testimony unto the wicked, that they might not, at any time, plead ignorance of the truth, which they have oppugned, and blasphemed; as, the Gospel must be preached, if not for conversion, yet for a testimony unto them. *Mat. 24. 14.*

Use.

This, if any thing, should abate the fury of all the enemies of Christ, and his Church, that rise up against his kingdome, *Psal. 2. 6.* The drift of the Psalm is, to perswade all men, to submit themselves to the dominion of Christ; and sundry reasons are set down: as. 1. They, indeed, consult, and binde themselves, but, it is but a vain thing; yet, saith the Lord, *have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.* And, what though tyrants, in all times, have set themselves to extirpate the very name of Christ; yet, out of the very ashes of those slain for his testimony, have sprung up others, to defend the Lords cause; *2 Tim. 2. 9.* *I suffer trouble, even unto bonds; yet the word of the Lord is not bound;* that still hath its free passage, and that the swifter, by meanes of persecutions, *Phil. 1. 10.* And, let it admonish all those amongst us, if any such, that oppose themselves against Gods truth, to lay down all their intendements; many attempts there have been, to put out from amongst us, the very light of Gods truth, &c. Yet still, the Lord stablisheth it; yea, beloved, as our Saviour speaks, *Luk. 19. 40.* When the Pharisees would have had our Saviour rebuke his Disciples, for acknowledging him the Messiah; If these should be silent, the stones would cry; that is, rather, then God will have his truth unconfessed, undefended, he will make the very stones of the streets to publish it: *Wherefore, kiss the son,*  
lest



lest he be angry ; that is, submit to his dominion lest yee perish from the way.

The properties, and behaviour of men truly fearing God. 1. That they stand up, to stop the mouth of blasphemy, and to maintain Gods truth against the adversaries thereof. 2. That they labour to stablish one another, in perswasion of Gods truth, and care of his children. 3. That they think upon his name.

Observ. 2.

The first of these properties, see in all the Saints of God, *Iob* 32. 19. When *Elihu* had heard the fond reasonings, and censures of *Iob*'s friends; as if afflictions could not, with Gods justice, be inflicted on Gods servants; the Spirit was in him, even as new wine in vessels, without vent, and he could not keep silence. *Jeremy*, *cap.* 20. 9. when he saw, that the word of God became a reproach unto him, that the people fell a scoffing at his most serious reprehensions, and severe denunciations of judgment against the sins of the people, he professeth of himself, that (in his weakness) he had resolved, and almost vowed to speak no more, in the name of the Lord; but thy word (saith he) was in me as fire, and he was weary of bearing, when he heard the railing, and blasphemy of the multitude. *Psal.* 39. 3. *David*, he also had a purpose to keep silence before the wicked, but that same fiery Spirit of God, would not let him be at rest, he must speak, or burst assunder, &c. See also, *Act.* 17. I might be infinite this way. If any man demand the reason of it, it's nothing but this; the ardent, and fiery love that is in them, to the glory of God; having tasted of his love in Christ, they cannot indure to see Gods name dishonoured; life it self not so precious unto them, as Gods glory. Besides, this is the very work of the Spirit of God, as our Saviour, *Matth.* 3. 11. he is compared unto fire; as in other respects, so for this also, that he is of a strong and operative nature, in the hearts of the children of God; as *Gen.* 6. 3. He is sayd, in *Noah*, to have striven with men.

By this, let us try our selves, whether our hearts be possessed with the fear of Gods name, indeed, or no : Beloved, we cannot have a surer testimony of the soundness of Gods graces in us, then this ; the fearless maintaining, and defending of the Lords cause, against the adversaries, and blasphemers of Gods truth. Look then, and see how thou findest thy heart affected, when thou hearest the blasphemies of the multitude.

Beloved, these, and as great blasphemies, we are, some of us, forced to hear from prophane men, in the Church of God : Its vain, to serve God, and, what get they, by their zeale, but hatred, and obloquy, and trouble amongst men ? Now, when thou hearest any of Gods trath's blasphemed, and evil spoken of ; how feelest thou thy self affected ? Goeth it not to thy heart, nearer, than any thine own outward reproach ? else, suspect thy self.

And, alas, beloved, to see the state of most men, this way, argues a nullity of Gods fear in their hearts. If it be but a friends name called in question, how do we startle ? If our own credit never so little impeached, and questioned, that kindles us, and sets all on fire ; but, if Gods name be blasphemed, his word traduced, his ordinances violated, &c. How keep we silence, as if this, of all other things, did least concern us. Beloved, this is the effect of Gods fear in the hearts of his children, to be much affected at the dishonour of his name.

When *Iehu* approached neer unto *Iesabel*, and espyed her, in her window, trimming her self, after the fashion of harlots ; he cries out to them with her. *Who is on my side, Who ? and the Eunuchs threw her down.* Beloved, the Lord seems, sometimes, thus to say to us, in the extremities of the peoples blasphemies ; and he seems to cry unto us, *Who is on my side ?* If then thou be silent ; that which our Saviour hath, *Matth. 12. 30.* will be here applied ; *who is not him, is sure against him ;* and so shall be accepted, in the day of accounts.

2 King. 9. 31.

A second property, that they labour to edifie, and exhort each other, that they may preserve them from infection by those, who labour to overthrow their faith; as here, these Atheists they begin to publish it, *it's vain to serve God*; Now, lest the people of God should hereby be poisoned; they that fear God, begin to confirm their brethren, every one his neighbour; as if he had said, look not to these blasphemous wretches; for, surely, the Lord hearkens, and hears, &c. And this, as it is the practice of Gods Saints, every where, so hath it the precept, and commandment of God, *Jude 23. Edifie one another in your most holy faith. Heb. 10. 24. Provoke to love, and to good works; See Psal. 34. 8.* And, indeed, it's one end, why God endues us with his graces, namely, to strengthen our brethren, *Luk. 22. 32. See, 1 Cor. 12. 7.*

Let us then be all exhorted, in these declining daies, thus to stablish one another, in the perswasion of Gods truth; as Saint Paul hath it, *strengthen the weak knees, comfort the feeble-minded; 1 Thess. 5. 14. Heb. 12. 13.* and provide that *that which is halting, be not turned out of the way, but may rather be healed.* And, beloved, sundry reasons there are for it. 1. The evilness of the times, wherein we see it verified; that the love of many waxeth cold. 2. Look we to the carriage of all things; and see, whether we find it not true, that these Atheists here speak of; the wicked are set up; so that, if there were not an expectation of another life, it were better to be any thing, even the vilest miscreant, then to profess the fear of the Lord. 3. Those many discouragements, that we shall see raised up to the Children of God. Beloved, if ever that were needfull, that our Saviour speaks, strengthen thy brethren, *Luk. 22. 32.* Now are the days. 4. And, methinks, if there were no other reason, then that industrious, and never wearied paines of the adversary, to subvert the faith of Gods Children, it should move us: Shall the limbs of the divell be more painfull, to overthrow, then we to build.

Use.

Use. 2.

build up the Church of Christ? Thus then let us do : And, let no man say, they shall, every one, bear their own burthen; for, even to us shall be imputed their ruin, if they perish, through defect of our admonition.

If this be the mark of Gods childe, to confirm in the truth; what shall we judg of those, that labour to pervert their faith? And, to spread even opinions of Atheisme it self into the mindes of men? *This is an evil that I have seen, under the sun*; would God, it were not found in Jacob, even in our own congregation! to say nothing of that opinion, which our practice testifieth us, to be possessed withall, of overmuch strictness, in the service of God. How many such pestilent instruments hath Sathan, every where, that insinuate into the mindes of the simple, and ignorant, opinions of Atheisme, yea perswasions there-to? *Whose damnation is just.*

Observ.

Third sign, and property of them; they think upon Gods Name. For explication, know we, that Gods name is, sometimes, put for the Majesty of God himself; sometimes, for his glory; whether sence we take it, it matters not. Its true, that a man fearing God, his property is alwaies, to have God before his eyes, *Psal. 16. 8.* The Lord is ever, and continually, in his meditation: Or, if we take the other sence; this also shall be found their practice; they think upon his name, that is, that's one principall part of their care, and study, how God may be glorified, and his name kept from dishonour, and blasphemy: That, whereas the uttermost care of a worldling is, how he may grow great upon earth; the care of Gods children is, how God may best be glorified; and he is ever devising something, within the compass of his calling, how farr glory may come to the Name of God. When *David* was now at rest, and sate in his house; mark, what thoughts his minde was possessed withall; considering what an house he had built for himself, to dwell in; he thus speaks to *Nathan* his seer: Behold, saith he, I dwell

dwell in an house of Cedar trees ; but, the Ark of the Lord remains in the curtains ; it seems, he more discontented himself, that that had not been his principal, and first thought, that the glory of God should have been provided for.

By this also try we our selves, and our uprightness in the sight of God. Surely, who so findes not this in himself, that his principal thought, and care is, that God may be glorified ; I may boldly say of that man, he is none of Gods.

*Quest.* Is it then not lawful, to think of the things of this life ?

*Ans.* No doubt, yes ; but, in getting of these, this is the difference betwixt Gods children, and another. That which the man who feareth God, aimeth at, is this ; that God may be glorified ; so, in sports, no doubt lawful, so be, they are lawfully and moderately used ; but, look that this be thy end, that thou mayest be fitter to glorifie God, and do him service ; else, thou usest recreations as an Epicure, not as a childe of God.

Well, now hear what it is, that they avouch. *A book of remembrance is written for those that fear God* ] This is spoken, after the manner of men ; for our capacity ; that, as men use, for better remembrance, to keep a book of *memorandum's*, that they may not forget ; See *Heb.* 6. 1. So, this is attributed unto God, to signifie unto us, that he doth certainly remember the services of his children.

Hence then, the collection is easie ; that the Lord will never forget, to reward the services of his Saints that serve him : See *Heb.* 6. 10. *God is not unrighteous, that he should forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have shewed to his name ; Psal.* 16. 8. *Thou tellest my wandrings, and puttest all my tears into thy bottle ; all things noted in the Lords register ; See Neh.* 13. 14, 22, 31. *Yea, Matth.* 25. 44. Those things that the Saints had forgotten, the Lord remembers ; See *Eph.* 9. 31.

*Observ.*



This should encourage Gods children, in his service; yea, though they see their services amongst men, altogether to want recompence, and reward; and thought the Lord long delay, yet, at length, in due time, *we shall reape, if we faint not*, Gal. 6.9.

This also should encourage Ministers, though of all others, their labours be most slenderly regarded amongst men, as *Isai. 49. 4. I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength; nevertheless, my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.* Thus should Magistrates encourage themselves, though for conscionable discharge of duties, they receive nothing amongst men, but shame, and reproach; let it be enough, as *Nehemiah* prays, that the Lord remembers thee in this; So, in works of mercy: though, perhaps, thou fearest to lose it, even as if thou shouldst cast it down the waters, yet, after many days, thou shalt finde it, *Eccles. 11. 1. &c.*

Again, doth the Lord remember the good works, and words of his servants? No doubt, he hath also, then, his remembrance-book, his register, for the ungodly; See *Rev. 20. 12. The books are opened*; a glympse whereof we may see in that little book of the conscience; which though in times of peace, it be as a book shut up; yet, in judgments of God, layeth open it self to the view of ungodly men. *Joseph's* brethren, a long time, carried away the matter smoothly; but, at length, in affliction, mark, how conscience sheweth its record; *Gen. 42. 21, 22.* Now, *his blood is required*: *Herod* had slain *John Baptist* with the sword, *Mat. 14.* Mark how, when he hears of the fame of Christ, conscience is his remembrancer; *John Baptist's* blood still runs in his minde.

Now, beloved, that this one perswasion might be settled in our hearts; no doubt, it would restrain many of our sins: and those conclusions of Atheisme, *Psal. 94. 7. God seeth not*, or regards not, or, (his memory oppressed with multitude) forgets, breeds all this Atheisme, and profaness in practice.

Consider

Consider then, beloved, what the Lord, every where, teacheth, *Psal. 50. 21, 22. I will set thy sins before thee, in order* : Words, we think, are wind; and, with us, soon forgotten; yet, saith our Saviour, *every idle word shall come to be reckoned for, at the day of judgment*; *Mat. 12. 36.* And, let me say, as *David, Psal. 50. 22. Consider this, yee that forget God*; there is not an oath, that thou swearest, but the Lord knoweth it; there is not an idle word, but the Lord takes notice of it; not a wanton look, but the Lords eye seeth it; &c. And, if this were thought of, much wickedness would be restrained.

## VER. 17.

*And, they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day, when I make up my Jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

**T**He blessings of God upon those that fear him. *They shall be unto me a flock, peculium cordis*: some read, *Res desideratissima*, or, as some, his chiefe treasure: mark here the priviledges of those that fear God; they are called Gods peculiar, his lot, and his inheritance. Secondly, that the Lord *will spare them*; which is set down in a similitude.

The blessings that this includes. 1. Singular protection: there is an universal providence and protection, that is vouchsafed unto all his creatures; *Thou Lord shalt save both man, and beast*: There is a special protection, which the Lord vouchsafeth unto men, *1 Tim. 4. 10. The Saviour of all men*. There is, thirdly, a singular protection, which he carrieth over the Church, and those, in it, that fear him; specially, of them that believe. Besides the singular blessings, and gifts, that he vouchsafeth unto them; there are common graces, which he vouchsafeth unto all; as general knowledg; more special vouchsafed, to them

that fear him, see *Exod.* 19. 5.

That which we learn hence, is,

First, separation from the wicked; that, as the Lord singles us out, from the rest of mankind, to be his peculiar; so should we separate our selves from the corruptions of the times, see *2 Cor.* 7. 1.

Secondly, comforts that hence arise to Gods children; as assurance of defence in all miseries, and calamities:

*Observ. 2.*

The next priviledg promised, is sparing, or mercy; see *Psal.* 103. 13. Whence observe we, that remission of sins is a blessing peculiarly belonging to the Church of God; for these Christ alone merited, *Ioh.* 17. to these only God is a father. And it confutes the opinion of such, as make remission of sins, a common gift: for though it be so, in respect of offer, and propounding; yet is it not so, in respect of actual performance. Again, this, if there were no other thing, sheweth a plentiful difference betwixt religion, and Atheisme; in that, to the one, is promised remission of sins; to the other not. This the treasure of the Church of God: No sins are forgiven to a cast-away; but, every sin, to a childe of God, *Psal.* 32. 1. 1 *Ioh.* 1. 7.

And, this should comfort us against our infirmities, and imperfections, that, alas! shew themselves in every best duty, that we perform unto God; and this that, which most humbles Gods children, their present weakness, and imperfections considered; but, brethren, consider we, God is a father unto us; and if he see in us, but a striving to perform our duties acceptably, that desire is accepted, *Heb.* 13. 18. 1 *Pet.* 2. 5.

## VER. 18.

*Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous, and the wicked: between him, that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.*

**T**Hat which, in sum, is hence observable, is this; that the Lord will not alwayes suffer his children to be afflicted, and the wicked to prosper; but, a day shall come, wherein a sensible difference shall be put betwixt him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; the justice of God, and his truth requires it, *2 Thess. 1. 5.* Then shall Christ perfectly winnow the chaff from the wheat. 2. In common judgments, the Lord delivers his, *Ezek. 9. 4.* 3. The finall consummation reserved for the time of the last judgment, when the full separation shall be, *Mat. 25. 32.*

*Observe.*

And, this should stay Gods children, against that temptation, which ariseth from that seeming confusion of things, in this life; See *Psal. 37. & 73. & Jer. 12. 1.* A thing, that hath troubled the Saints of God, in all times. It pleaseth God, for a time, to grant the wicked prosperity, and to exercise his Children with afflictions: Reasons. 1. To prove the patience of his Saints. 2. To give the wicked their portion. 3. To nourish in us the hope of another life. But alas! as their rejoycing is but short; so the afflictions of Gods servant are but momentany, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* Trust then in God, and keep his way; judg not of the happines of Gods Children, by things present, but by their end, and issue; *Psal. 37. 37, 38.* The wicked exalted, but, to be thrown down into utter destruction; the godly afflicted, but, his end is peace.



## CHAP. 4. VER. 1, 2, 3.

For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day that cometh, shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts; that it shall leave them neither root, nor branch. But, unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, &c.



THE former conclusion proved, by divers effects of Christs coming; to the wicked, a black day; set out in similitudes.

The time of accomplishment hereof, is apparent, by the place, that its to be understood of Christs first coming in the flesh; and, if any question, how this verified, then? It was *Inchoative*, and by way of preparation, then; and shall be *Consummate*, in the day of the last judgment.

*Obstru.*

That Christ came not to save all, but to be a judg. and destroyer of the wicked and ungodly; this place confutes it; See *Ioh. 9. 39. Luk. 2. 34.* and it appeareth. 1. By the event. 2. By Christs own profession, *Ioh. 17. 3.* By the sign, in that grace is not given to all, to receive the benefit.

And, this reproves that fond opinion, that Christ came to save all. How is it, then, that all are not saved? They answer, because they will not; but absurdly; For, 1. God hath power to frame mens wils, if his will were such. 2.

How



How unreasonable is it, that God ſhould will to ſave, and man diſappoint his purpoſe?

*Ob.* Gods will was not abſolute, but conditionall.

*Anſw.* Its that the Scripture teacheth ; that the Lord had decreed ſomething certain of thoſe that he meant to ſave ; otherwiſe, not likely, that he would ſend his ſon, and he ſubmit himſelf to thoſe indignities ; not having any certainty, whether any man ſhould accept this grace, or no. 2. Its a great unlikelihood, that the Lord ſhould hang the fulfilling of his decrees, upon the mutability of mans will.

And this that deceives many, the fond, and groundleſs opinion, that the Lord hath ſent his ſon, to reconcile all unto him.

*Ob.* The world.

*Anſw.* Of believers only.

*Ob.* All men, 1 Tim. 2. 4.

*Anſw.* Of all ſorts.

*Ob.* God, otherwiſe, unjuſt.

*Anſw.* Not ſo. 1. For he is bound to none. 2. They willingly reſuſe the grace offered.

Let us rather labour to know, whether we be of them, that Chriſt came to ſave. Signs. 1. If Chriſt have redeemed us from our vain converſation, 1 Pet. 1. 18. 2. Our eſteem of Chriſt, Phil. 3. 8. 3. The life of Chriſt maniſeſted in us, Rom. 8. 4. 4. Lively hope; hope that hath life, is operative, 1 Pet. 1. 3. 1 Joh. 3. 3. 5. Deſire to win other, Pſal. 34. 8.

Secondly, obſerve hence, how eaſily the Lord can deſtroy the wicked. Gods wrath compared to a violent fire; the wicked, to the lighteſt things, to ſtubble : Gods wrath; to the winde; the wicked, to chaff, and the lighteſt duſt, Pſal. 1. 4. Gods power, to an iron rod; the wicked, to a pot ſheard, Pſal. 2. 9.

It ſhould teach the wicked, to ſubmit to Chriſts Scepter, and to ſerve him, *ni reverence and fear*; See Heb. 12. 28.

And,

*Obſerv.* 2.

*Uſe.*

And, withal, it should comfort the righteous, in the greatest pride and jollity of the wicked. How easie is it for the Lord, in a moment, to consume them? Be not afraid, when a man is made rich, and the glory of his house is increased; what, though they grow up like Cedars in Lebanon? See *Nebuchadnezzar* cast out amongst beasts; *Pharaoh* suddenly destroyed in the Sea: The rich mans soul taken away, in a night, *Luk. 12. 20.*

How this accomplished, in Christs first coming?

*Ans. 1. Preparative. 2. Spiritually, in those flames of Gods wrath, wherewith, inwardly, their consciences are filled.*

Wherefore, though we see not utter destruction presently executed upon the ungodly; yet, let this patient us, to consider that God hath invisible, and unseen judgments: And, if a man were but privy to those fears, and inward pangs, that wicked men are plunged unto, he would never envy them their outward felicity.

*Ver. 2, 3.] In these verses are set down the benefits, whereof men fearing God, are made partakers. 1. The sun of righteousness ariseth unto them. 2. Healing under his wings. 3. Continuance of regeneration. 4. Victory over their enemies.*

*Observ.*

Christ the sun of righteousness; because, righteous, not for himself, but for us, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* Divine righteousness proper to him, as God; humane, by voluntary dispensation under-taken, and performed for us.

*Use.*

This comforts against conscience of our own unrighteousness; sith what righteousness Christ had, he had it for us. 2. Because, from him we receive righteousness; as the light is derived from the sun, *Ioh. 1. 14.* Understand this: 1. Of imputed. 2. Of inherent righteousness. Whence, those are confuted, who imagine man able to confer something, to his own justification. And withal, here we see, whither we must resort, to have all our imperfections and defects supplied.

*With*

*With health, or, healing under his wings*] The wounds of our soul are our sins; Christ is the healer of those, who betake themselves unto him, 1 *Pet.* 2. 24. *By his stripes we were healed*: under such a distress, then, repair unto him. *Matth.* 11. 28.

Observ.

The next benefit is, continual flourishing, and increase of the graces of regeneration, *Ezek.* 47. 12. Trees planted in Gods garden, are watered by the rivers issuing out of the sanctuary, *and bring forth new fruit every moneth*. And, by this may we try the truth of our regeneration; the seed is immortal, and permanent, 1 *Joh.* 3. 9. and, such as springs up unto eternal life, *Ioh.* 4. 14.

Verf. 3.] The next benefit is, victory over the wicked, and all the wicked adversaries of our salvation: *Ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes, under the soles of your feet, &c.*

Vers. 3.

If any ask, how this is verified:

*Ans.* First, in Christ, who is our head; he hath overcome for us. Secondly, in us, after a sort, that they are not able to hurt us, *Rom.* 8. 28. Which is enough to comfort us, in all afflictions, *Ioh.* 16. 33.

Verf. 4. *Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, &c.*] Admonition here given us, how to prepare for Christs coming; *remember the law of Moses*. What are the reasons of it? 1. Its a means of humiliation, *Gal.* 3. 10. 2. As a rule of life.

Observ.

Antinomians reproved, that would have the law taken out of the Church of God; where as great, and manifold is the use of the law. 1. It serves to discover sin, *Rom.* 3. 20. *Rom.* 7. 9. 2. Shews the punishment due to sin, *Gal.* 3. 10. 3. scourgeth unto Christ, *Gal.* 3. 24. 4. And, is a perfect rule of obedience.

Use.

Hence, then, learn we all, who would, with benefits, receive Christ, to be diligent this way; in labouring to see our imperfections. Surely, he best knows, and is best fitted to receive Christ, that best profits in the law of God.

## VER. 5, 6.

*Behold! I will send you Elias the Prophet, before the coming of the great, and dreadful day of Lord: And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

A promise and prediction of *John Baptists* coming; where is. 1. A description of *Johns* person, by his gifts, set out in resemblance of him to *Elias*; therefore, called metaphorically, *Elias* the Prophet. 2. The time of his coming, namely, immediately, before the coming of that great, and fearful day. 3. By his effect, he shall convert; the action amplified, by the subject, and terms, *hearts of children to fathers*, and of fathers, to children: And, by the end, *lest I come and smite the earth, with cursing*. As touching the sense of the words, the quare is betwixt us, and *Pontificians*, what is here meant, by *Elias* the Prophet? Whether *Elias* the *Thibite*, in person; or, *John Baptift* metaphorically, and analogically, called *Elias*? Papists, in the question, touching the time of Antichrists coming, generally understand it, of *Elias*, in person: and hence, thus conclude, that Antichrist is not yet come, because *Elias*, and *Enoch*, who must come in the time of Antichrist, are not yet come in person.

Their conclusion, that Antichrist is not yet come, they go about to prove, by six signes, which must be of Antichrists coming. Two foregoing. 1. Preaching of the Gospel to all nations. 2. Desolation of the *Roman* Empire. Two accompanying it. 1. The Preaching of *Enoch*, and *Elias*, in person. 2. Bloudy persecution, in such sort, that publique worship of God shall cease. Two following it. 1. The destruction of Antichrist, after three yeares, and an half. 2. The end of the world.

But,

But, none of these are yet accomplished : *Ergo*. Now as touching this controversie, at large, my purpose is not to speak : nor yet to deal with any other reason, but this, that they take out of this text.

In the dayes of Antichrist, *Henoch*, and *Elias*, must come in person, to preserve the Elect, in the faith of Christ, and convert the Jews ; but they are not yet come : *Ergo*. To say nothing of *Enoch*, but to insist in that, they urge for *Elias* ; that he must live in the dayes of Antichrist, they labour to prove. 1. By testimonies of Scriptures, and of Fathers. 2. By reasons, out of the text. Their testimonies of scripture, are three. *Mal.* 4. 5. *Matth.* 17. 11. *Rev.* 11. 3. &c.

We will, first, propound our judgment, with the confirmation of it ; and then answer to the objections of Papists. This, then, is the truth ; that by *Elias* is here meant *Iohn Baptist*, the fore-runner of Christ Jesus. And, if any man ask, why he is called *Elias* ? The Angel, *Luk.* 1. 17. gives the reason, because he goes before Christ, in the Spirit and power of *Elias* : This likeness there is between them. 1. In office, reforming of the Church. 2. Gifts of courage, boldness, liberty of speech. 3. In habite, not unlike. 4. In people, with whom they dwell.

First, we have the testimony of the Angel, *Luk.* 1. 17 : Alledging this very Scripture, and applying it to *Iohn Baptist*. 2. Exposition of our Saviour, *Mat.* 17. 10, 11, 12. & *Mat.* 11. 14.

*Ob.* Their reason, out of this place, is this ; this cannot be understood of *Iohn Baptist*, because, speech is here of Christs second coming ? proved, because the day great and terrible ; but, Christs first day, called the acceptable time, and day of salvation, *2 Cor.* 6. 2.

*Ans.* This day of Christs first coming is called terrible, in respect of the wicked, *Mal.* 3. 2, 3. So also, *Mat.* 3.

*Ob.* *Mat.* 17. 11. *Elias* must restore all things, so did not *Iohn*.



*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* Its strange to see how they dare, so violently, to pervert the text, *vers*. 12. Christ, by the testimony of *Disciples*, speaks of *Iohn Baptist*; these men will controule Christ's own exposition. 2. That restitution referred to reformation of religion, and must be understood, *Inchoative*.

*Ob.* *Rev.* 11. 3.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* The things there spoken of, cannot, in any hand, agree to *Elias*; Reasons. 1. He never saw death, before his assumption; unlikely therefore, that, after glory received, he should dye. 2. It repugnes the nature of a glorified body, one *dos* whereof, is immortality, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1.

*Ob.* No other Reason can be given of their assumption.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* Though we know no reason, yet would it not follow, that that was the reason: Other reasons are, probably, assigned; as. 1. Perhaps, to prevent Idolatry. 2. To nourish hope of immortality, after this life ended. However, this reason concludes nothing: And so have we freed the text from Popish glosses.

*Observ.*

Now, what we may hence observe, is this; how the Lord, according to necessity of times of the Church, doth, extraordinarily, furnish his servants, with the gift of his Spirit, according to the calling, whereto he assigns them.

When he, first, collected his Church, amongst the *Israelites*, what rare endowments were there given to *Moses*? When all was overgrown with Idolatry, an extraordinary Spirit put upon *Elias*; the same doubled upon *Elizens*. *Iohn Baptist* hath them renewed; the Apostles, to plant a Church, amongst the Gentiles; greater then *Iohn Baptist*, *Mat.* 11. 11. And, what a Spirit was that given to *Luther*, of boldness, courage, zeal, knowledg &c.

*Use.*

By this, then, we may judg of all men, who ever they are, that undertake extraordinary works, and employments, in the Church of Christ. As, we have those in the Church of Rome; the head of that Church, takes on him

him, the government of the whole Church of God ; a burthen not meete for any mens shoulders : And, yet, as themselves confels of such, they are men but of ordinary measure of gifts, of knowledg, wifdome, or other abilities: Now surely, if the Lord had sent them to such a work ; we should see this seale set unto them ; gifts extraordinary, meete for such a function. Its true, that *Moses* was called to the government of the (whole) people of *Israel* ; but, consider, and see, how the Lord gifted him, above his brethren.

And, as our Saviour speaks to the sons of *Zebedee*, yee know not, saith he, of what spirit yee are, &c. And, let me apply it, a little more generally ; you may judg of those that undertake the office of Ministers, without any measure of gifts, more then vulgar ; suppose, a liberty to read, &c.

Secondly, this should teach us, not to detract any office, or employment, to which we shall see the Lord leading us, directly. For, let us well be assured, that whatsoever work he sends us unto, he will fit us for ; See *Exod.* 4. 12.

*Ier.* 1. 6, 7.

*He shall turn the heart of the Fathers to the Children.]*

*Vers. 6.*

*Quest.* How can this be ascribed to *John Baptist*, sith its the Lord that turns, and enclines the heart ?

*Answ.* To God, as the principall ; to men, as the instruments. And thus, as we are instruments, it pleaseth the Lord to grace us with the title of the work, as, *1 Tim.* 4. 16. Thou shalt save, thou, as the instrument.

*Observ.*

From whence, may these two things be concluded. 1. That the Lord is usually effectually by those, whom he calls to the work of the Ministry ; and that, to the conversion of some, more, or less, wheresoever he sends them : Never is (sent) Minister, unfruitfull, or barren : *Lo me, and the children, that thou hast given me, Isai.* 8. 18. See *Gal.* 2. 8. He that was mighty, by *Peter*, was mighty, through *Paul* ; &c. See *Isai.* 55. 10, 11. As the snow,

and the rain, *so is my Word, it never returns empty* ; See *Mat. 13. 4. Job. 15. 16.*

*Ob.* If any shall object, and say, that *Isaiah* is sent to harden, not to convert, *Isa. 6. 10.* And, *Ezekiel* told, *cap. 2.* That they will not turn :

*Ans.* Places understood of the greater part ; but, *Isa. 6. ult.* there was a tenth part returned.

Some caveats must here be remembered. 1. That this must be understood of the settled, and stablished preaching of the word ; for otherwise, God sends some, only, to deprive of excuse. 2. That fruit, at first, appears not ; but lyeth, as it were, under the clods ; See *Act. 18. 10.* And, as it was, in the days of *Elias*, *1 King. 19. 18.*

*Use.*

Then, see we what to judg of them, to whose Ministry God gives no blessing at all. Its an evident sign, they were not sent of God ; See *Ier. 23. 21, 22.* And, this should encourage us, that are Ministers, in the work of our Ministry ; and should prevail against all impediments, seem they never so great ; considering, the Lord will sure be effectual in us.

Again, see we a little, and judg we of our selves, and we shall know, whether the Lord hath, in mercy, sent the Ministry of the word unto us ; surely, if Gods word have wrought in us, to conversion, *Rom. 1. 16.* We may then say, the Lord, in mercy, hath sent it unto us ; if otherwise, he hath not sent in mercy, but in wrath : See *1 Thess. 2. 13.* It worketh mightily in those that believe ; and, *Col. 1. 6.* Its come unto you, and is fruitfull.

See we yet, farther, the degrees of efficacy of the word of God. 1. It prevails with some, to illumination. 2. With some, to work a little temporary delight, *Mat. 13. 21.* 3. With some, to a partiall reformation, *Mar. 6. 20.* 4. To humiliation : All this while, thou canst not assure thy self, the Lord hath sent his word to thee, for thy good : How then ? Namely, when its so far powerfull, that it converts thee, turning thy heart, and changing thy whole life ;

life ; thou mayest, then, truly say, the Lord is mercifull unto thee, *Act. 26. 18.*

Now, notes of a changed, and converted heart, are many. 1. When sin grows odious unto us ; those especially, wherein we have oftenest, and with greatest pleasure, offended. 2. Whenas, with freedom of heart, we serve God, See *2 Cor. 3. 17.* 3. When the whole outward man is reformed ; the tree once good, the fruit is good ; the fountain purged, the streams are also clean, *Iam. 3. 11.*

Lastly, *Enthusiasts* hence confuted, that hold the word, and Ministry thereof, a dead letter.

The next thing here observable, is, that God ordinarily, useth his Ministers to convert men by ; See *Rom. 10. 17. 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Act. 9.* Paul sent to *Ananias* ; *Act. 8. 31.* Philip to the *Eunuch* : Reasons, generally. 1. That the glory might be Gods, *1 Cor. 2.* 2. To prevent delusions. 3. We not able to endure the terrour of God Majesty, *Exod. 20. 19.* 4. Thus God honours mans nature. 5. Man fittest, as having experience of infirmities. 6. Proves humility, whether we will stoope to Gods ordinance, though dispensed by a weak man, subject to like passions with our selves.

Why ministers, rather then ordinary Christians ?

*Ans.* Its Gods will to have it so, *2 Cor. 5. 19.* He hath put in us the word of reconciliation.

*Ob.* Common Christians convert, *Iam 5. ult. Act. 11. 20, 21.*

*Ans.* 1. Ordinarily, they prepare, convert not. 2. After faith, and repentance general, may be means, by admonition, to stir up graces that lye dead, as *Act. 18. 26.* and so draw to renewing repentance. 3. Extraordinarily, as by them of *Cyprus*, and *Cyrene*.

This should teach us, as we love our souls, and desire salvation, to hang on the ministry of the word ; see *Prov. 8.* Blessed such, as wait at the posts of the gates of wisdom. 2. Graces grow dull, without it, *1 Thess. 5. 19. 20.*

Reproved

*Observ.*

*Use.*

Reproved such, as forsake the gathering together of the Saints, *Heb.* 10. 25. So laying themselves open to peril of apostasy. 2. In that case, prayers abominable, *Prov.* 28. 9.

Another sort reprobable, are such, as not content with wisdom of God, desire, and look to be instructed, and brought to God, immediately, by the Spirit; saying, when the time comes, God will turn me; whereas, now is the time, when God gives the means.

Thirdly, such as desire to be taught by Angels; as the glutton for his brethren, *Luk.* 16. And, if they could hear Christ speak from Heaven, they would believe; falsely, as our Saviour saith.

Try we ourselves, by this, for our conversion; and see whether, by this mean, it hath been wrought. Surely, beloved, I will not say, but education may do much, to prepare: and reading, much, to prepare; but, if thou hast no other change, than what thou hast by thine own reading, &c. Thou hast weak comfort: who ever read of any converted by himself, or his own industry, without help of another? *Isa.* 57. 19. *I create the fruit of the lips, to be peace.*

Therefore, pray we the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers, *Matth.* 9. *ult.* Surely, we cannot say of such, as lack those, that they have the ordinary means. I say not, but God may save some of them; for, he is not so tyed to his ordinary, but that, sometimes, he may work without it; but yet they lack the ordinary means of conversion.

Follow, next, the terms of this conversion:

*The hearts of the fathers, unto the children; and of children, unto the fathers* ] To omit the several exposition of others; by fathers, and children; and converting the hearts, each to other; the meaning (I take it) is this; that, whereas they were alienated one from another, in their affections; father hating son, and son, father, for truths sake, as *Matth.* 10. 35. So powerful should John be, in his



his Ministry, that he should unite, and knit them together in a bond of most entire affection; and bring many of them, before dissenting, now, to unite themselves, in the worship of God.

Whence observe, that where the word is powerfull, it works not only reconciliation with God, but peace also with men; with all men, in whom the word is powerfull: See *Act. 2. 46.* Nothing then, holden too dear, betwixt the members of Christs Body; & 4. 34, 35. See *Isas. 11. 6. 7, 8, 9.* All those head-strong, and brutish affections are calmed, and corrected; and, the wisdom from above, is peaceable. *Iam. 3. 17.*

*Observe.*

Now, then, we see, what to answer unto that common objection, against the Ministry of the Gospell; namely, that its the leader of contentions, and debates. and as our people speak, an enemy to all good fellowship? Now, beloved, consider we, that the Gospell it self, is, in it self, and in the hearts of all in whom its effectual, an instrument, and mean of peace.

*Use.*

Whence, then, comes it, that we see dissensions commonly follow it? As the complaint is common; before this preaching came up amongst us, we had as good fellow-like a parish, and as much good neighbourhood amongst us, &c. Now, all is in an uprore; the child is divided against the father; &c. But, I wish such to consider, what kind of fellowship that is; where the Gospell is not powerfull; a brotherhood in evill, as *Gen. 49. 5.* Fellowship in excess, 1 *Pet. 4. 4.* which is enmity with God: And, moreover, know we, that dissensions which arise, after the Gospell, arise not from the nature of the Gospell; but, from the corruption of mens hearts, and their rebellions against the truth: Therefore, observe amongst men, soundly religious; you shall see an absolute concord: yea, such an one, and so soundly built upon theright grounds of peace, as is not easily broken; perhaps, some \* jarres fall out, as betwix- *Barnabas*, and *Saul*; yet such as are easily reconciled:

\* *AQ. 16. 39.*

led : Whereas ; every trifling occasion breaks the peace, amongst those others. And hereby let us judg of our selves, whether the Gospell hath been powerfull in us ; we shall know it, by this ; the knitting of our hearts together in the unity of the Spirit, *Eph. 4. 3.* Add unto this a peaceable disposition, See *Iam. 3. 17.* Will a man profess religion, yet delight in contentions ? Surely, he lies against the truth, and such wisdom is earthly ; whereas that from above is first pure, then, peaceable, &c. And, what shall we think of those *Salmanders*, whose life is in the fire of contentions ? and, never merrier, they say, then when at war, &c.

The end followeth ; *lest I come, and smite the earth with a curse* ] That is, lest coming, and finding none ready, by faith, to entertain me, I should smite the earth, in cursing.

*Observ.*

Where, let us observe, that the Ministry of the word, its that, that bears up the whole powers of Heaven, and earth ; that is the very pillar, on which its built, by which upholden.

If any man demand, how ?

*Ans.* Because, its the means to beget, and maintain faith ; it is it, that brings to faith ; and for the Elect and believers sakes ; is the world upholden : there is nothing, that withhold the utter overthrow of the world but the Children of God : As *Lot in Sodome*, preserved it ; *Gen. 19. 22.* See *2 Pet. 2. 8. 9.*

*Use.*

Now, beloved, this should, if nothing else, work in us, if not a love of the Word, yet, a care to uphold the Ministry of it ; seeing, by it, we enjoy, whatsoever we enjoy, upon the earth. And, what men should mean, that desire to put it out, from amongst us ; and whence those speeches of profanes ones, are ; saying, they would not care, though there were never a Preacher in the world. Well, beloved, yet is it true ; that the world is by it sustained ; and, its true, when the Ministry ceaseth, then shall the world cease.

And

And this should teach us also, if not to love, yet, not to malign, or envy the Children of God, that live amongst us. Surely, its for their sakes, that all men live, and the world it self is supported.

Δὲ μόνον τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς ὅσις. Amen.

FINIS.

Dd 2

AN

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